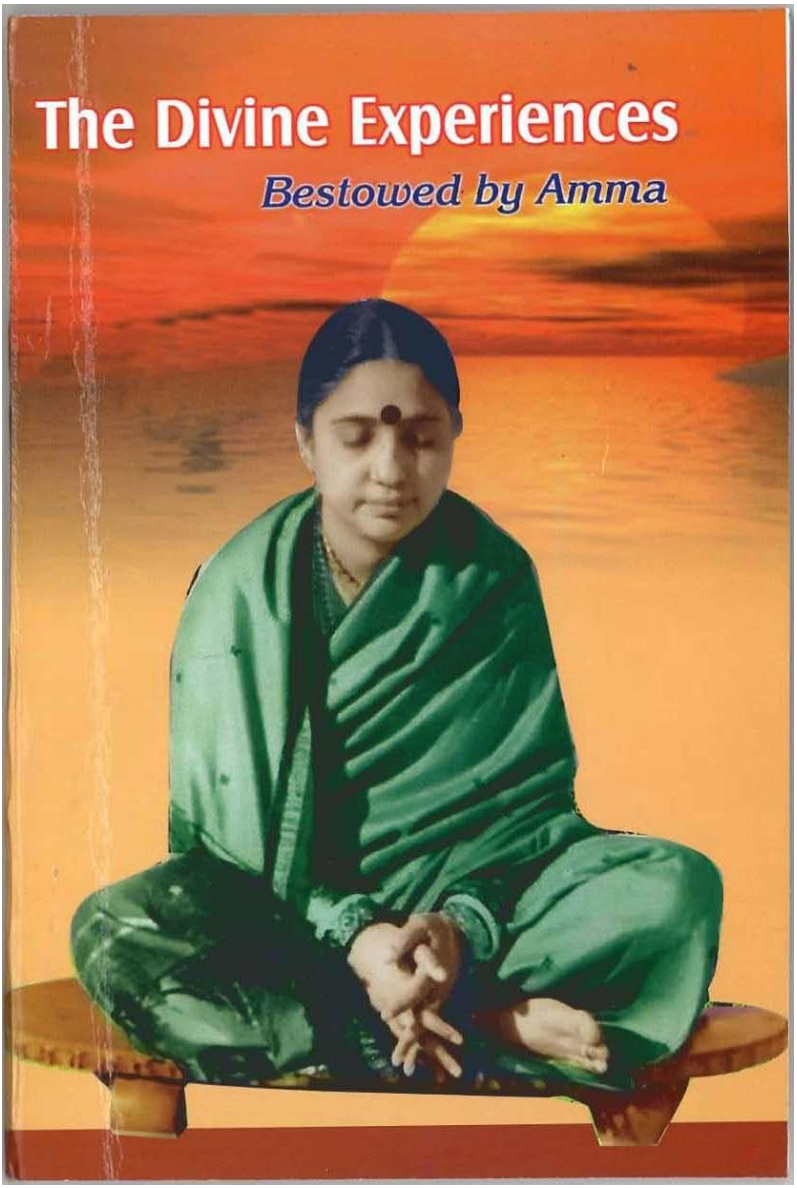
The Divine Experiences

Bestowed by Amma



The Divine Experiences Bestowed by Amma

Original Telugu version

T. Triloka Appa Rao

English Translation

Dr. Srinivas Mudrakartha

Veenadhari Mudrakartha

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By **:** Dr. Srinivas Mudrakartha
Veenadhari Mudrakartha

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This book is dedicated to the Lotus Feet of

The Mother of All
Mother Anasuya

and

Nannagaru

With devotion

Dr. Srinivas Mudrakartha
Veenadhari Mudrakartha

*On the Occasion of Opening Ceremony of **Sri Hyma Residential Collective** in Jillellamudi on June 2, 2013.*

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Jillellamudi

Reminiscences

Back home from a visit to Jillellamudi in October 2012, I was reading the original Telugu version of this book *'The Divine Experiences Bestowed by Amma'* given to me by the author Sri Triloka Appa Rao. As I was reading the book over several days, I experienced a heightened sense of sensitivity, the same that I experienced when I was reading the several books bought from Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's Ashram in Tiruvannamalai previously.

The several incidents narrated by brother Appa Rao, and the intensity of his *bhakti* (devotion) touched my heart, and was simply overwhelming on numerous occasions. It occurred to me that the book in English could benefit the blessings of Amma to a larger audience; hence I offered my service to translate into English to brother Appa Rao through brother Sreemannarayana, which was accepted at once, opining that this is nothing but Amma's inspiration. To which I do not disagree.

During my visit earlier, I had interactions with brother Sreemannarayana, and was overwhelmed at his unflinching faith in Amma. I met some others too, and found the same intensity of devotion in Amma. Brother Hanumababu averred that *'Jillellamudi is a siddhakshetram'*. How could I miss out this opportunity to get connected with Amma?

I found that there were so many similarities in the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and Amma that have probably been not been explored. At best, I found one small booklet listing out their comparative pronouncements by Makani Chandramohan in memory of his wife Smt. Prabhavati, also a devotee of Amma.

It is here that I found not only striking similarities but a beautiful 'complementarity' in the divine philosophy of Amma and Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. To my mind, Amma is the embodiment of Universal Love; by being a mother, she has taken the entire humankind and its various life forms into her fold. With herself as the Mother of the Family, she knit the bond of fraternity among all her children which is seen in the way that each one of her children addresses the other, as *brother or sister*. Interestingly, the address is as 'elder brother or elder sister!' I always wondered how that could be. There is always this age difference between any two persons, and how can an older person possibly address the younger as 'older brother?' I now felt that through this doctrine, Amma has perhaps chosen to break the so-called 'hierarchy' within the family fold where the 'older' members usually try and take control of the family often for wrong reasons. Her doctrine aims to break that pre-emptively and foster equality in relations! In this context, I recall reading about an incident when Bhagavan told a parent wailing over the premature death of his child at the age of five. Bhagavan said, *'How do you know his age is only five years?'* indicating that it is the *jnana* accumulated by the soul over births that is important and not the years. The years belong only to the body.

Amma has also demonstrated that life *exists* for us to celebrate. That is why she was spending time with children always, going on outings, chatting away, teaching nuances of life in a matter-of-fact manner, and often went to their houses too, to foster bonds. When a devotee asked her about the simplest way to attaining salvation, she replied, *'Family'.* How extremely relevant it is in today's context!! Bhagavan, on the other hand, had adopted the self-centred path, but soon returned to live a normal life (in Ashram) subsequent to attaining Self Realization, and proclaimed that *'True renunciation is divestment of desires, passions and attachments,*

and does not require abandoning family life'. When asked why he himself abandoned his home, he said it was his *'prarabda' (fate).* However, he declared that self-realization can be achieved only through self-inquiry. Notably, Amma too has guided her children through the path of self-realisation, while discharging their *dharma;* and many of her children have followed her dictum faithfully. Brother Triloka Appa Rao is one shining example.

Her proclamation, *'You take care of the Trust, and I will take care of you'* has a much deeper meaning than what can be understood on the face of it. To my mind, the *Trust* here implies 'the family' of which she has had been the mother; she wants the *family* to remain as one by continuing to proliferate the familial relationships among the brothers and sisters. She exhorts us to ensure that the Trust (a euphemism for 'family'), is intact irrespective of challenges, obstacles and hurdles that come our way. Taking care to see that the Trust remains in good financial condition is perhaps the least of the issues for Amma (or for us); retaining the thousand-string relationships among brothers and sisters is perhaps the most challenging one (for us!!). Amma recognizes this mundane reality, and through this message, desires that all of us continue as one large family for the sake of Individual and Universal Peace.

I pray Amma and Lord Narasimha Swamy to continue to bestow their blessings on brother Appa Rao for being the light-head for all of us in the path to salvation.

Dr Srinivas Mudrakartha

My parents late Sri Maddikera Ramanuja Chary and Smt. Vedavathi, my siblings Balaji and Vidyullatha and all other family members have been devoted to Amma for at least three

and a half decades. We used to have regular weekly puja in our home in Himayat Nagar, Hyderabad, as also organize important events. Our house used to be frequented by several brothers such as Dinakar, Saratchandra, Ramamurty and Parabrahmam for these events. My father's annual rites were conducted in Jillellamudi in 1992, during which my husband Dr Srinivas Mudrakartha also has visited Jillellamudi.

I believe that Amma has been kind to 'my' family. The bride ceremony in connection with my marriage in 1981 was conducted in Jillellamudi, by Amma herself. Several incidents occurred in my life that I attribute to Amma. I have had the good fortune to see Amma in my dreams, often adorned in the throne fully decked up, among other forms. She often responds to my pleas when I am in difficulties.

My prayers to Amma for continuing to bestow her blessings to brother Appa Rao, and to all readers of this book.

Veenadhari Mudrakartha

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Felicitations to My Brother

Amma is Mother, Amma is Father, Amma is God, Amma is All Pervading. It is not an easy task to write a commentary about brothers who are completely obsessed about Amma. Although I have not studied any spiritual scriptures, I cannot simply refuse the earnest request of my brother Triloka Appa Rao to write preface to this book, describing my own experiences. Amma blessed me with experiences despite of me. My only qualification for this task is that I am the biological son of the *Mother of All*.

Everyone has experiences. However, I am incapable of a zealous rendering like brother Sri Appa Rao who could connect his writing and experiences with Bhagavad Gita and Upanishads.

Under what circumstances did brother Appa Rao land at Jillellamudi for the first time? When did the thought of coming back to Jillellamudi emerge in him? After arriving in Jillellamudi, how did he end up developing complete faith in Amma? These questions and many more are answered in this book. I myself have been a witness to how Amma helped brother Triloka Appa Rao manage his mental vacillations between belief and doubt, and overcome physical obstacles. His complete transformation into a dedicated son and an unflinching devotee proves Amma's saying that *'Anyone coming to Jillellamudi with complete faith will never be let down'*. '*Seeing is Experience'* - one of Amma's numerous cryptic sayings can be evidenced in letter and spirit in this beautiful treatise replete with the author's own rich experiences! It is a spiritual treat to read brother Appa Rao's divine experiences of how Lord Sri Rama appeared as Amma in Bhadrachalam, and in the form of the Pradhana Archaka (chief priest) of Simhachalam, and during times when he was in dire straits. I experienced inexplicable bliss while reading this book. As I

read through the narrative of Bipin Kumar Behera, who stole brother's groundnut oil barrels, I was touched by the humaneness shown by the author in return. In fact, it is this humanitarian approach among all the brothers and sisters of Jillellamudi that moves me to the core. I am attracted to this, and desire that this philosophy spreads far and wide for the benefit of all.

I have already stated about the yogic powers of brother Appa Rao and his sadhana. I do not feel competent to comment on all his intricate and intimate, personal experiences. There is no other way than reading this treatise; I can only appreciate the fact that there are practitioners among brothers and sisters who are able to comprehend the many manifestations of Amma, and experience her benevolence and divinity. There are several aspects of Amma that are not easily comprehensible although her words and actions appear to be downright earthly and mundane. One such aspect is why Amma gives gifts of clothes and cares about feeding anyone who comes to Jillellamudi - anytime of the day or night. My understanding is that it is only to inculcate the habit of sharing our material possessions with others, beginning in a small way with clothes and foodgrains. Brother Appa Rao has had been following this dictat of Amma to the core; what more can one desire if all brothers and sisters too do so?

The honest rendering of real life experiences by brother Appa Rao in this treatise, and his total commitment to Amma and her philosophy, inspired me to write these few lines. It is imperative that the innumerable experiences of brothers and sisters who interacted with Amma are captured for the benefit of all. Nevertheless, only a few have the ability to do so effectively. Brother Appa Rao is one such unique person, and I felicitate him. I pray Amma to bless his family for all times to come.

'Ravi'
Brahmandam Ravindra Rao
Patron, Vishwajananee Parishad.

Divinity - The Principle of Love

This book reflects the intricately intertwined emotional bondage between the Disciple and the God. The timeline is said to be re-set every 60 years, to start with Prabhava, the first year. This treatise of 60 titles begins with *'Mumukshatvam - In Search of Self'* and ends with *'All is That'*. Perhaps, the author desires to communicate that a man who has taken birth begins his journey with a search for 'mumukshatvam' and ultimately ends in realising the truth *'All is That'*, and *'He is all'*. The author has also exactly gone through this journey.

Having to shoulder responsibilities at an early age, and unable to forbear the ever chasing troubles, he pleaded with God to bail him out.

'*Aartho jignasurarthardhi jnanicha Bharatarshabha*'
(Bhagavad Gita 7/16).

As early as in teens, brother Appa Rao got the fortune of serving God in four ways as enunciated in the sloka above in the form of Avadhutendra Saraswati Swamy, his disciple Ramadasa Swamy, Mumukshujana Mutt Head Sri Laxmana Yatindra, Sarada Priyananda, and Lalitha Mutt Head Sri Vasudevananda Swamy.

Although faced with numerous struggles that saw his life go up and down several times, brother Appa Rao reached the shore only through unswerving belief in God. True to the adage that 'God appears in the form of human', probably because of the power of *satsang*, brother Appa Rao had the darshan of God in the form of Chief Priest Narasimha Charyulu in Simhachala and Sri Rama in the form of Amma in Bhadradri. When asked, 'Amma, why do you undertake these tours?' Amma's reply, 'It is for seeing my children' amply displays the immense affection and love of Amma towards her children.

When asked, 'Why is it that so many people turn up to see you,' Amma counters, *'Is it not natural that children come to see their mother?'*

When Amma expressed her wish to visit brother Appa Rao's house, he hesitated saying that he stays in a small, rented house without proper facilities. Is it not the magnanimity of Amma that she said, *'Wherever you stay, that is your house; this body itself is a rented one.* And you are Appa Rao, isn't it?' So saying, she took him into her hug.

'When I close my eyes, I see various things. Why?' To a query by someone, Amma confirmed, *'When everything that is seen is That, then why close eyes, my son?'*

She gave a new definition for a *stoic*, as *'dedicated to duty, not pleasing someone.'*

When asked about the naxalites who created chaos and ran away with some valuables, Amma said that, *'Some children ask and take, while some snatch away.'* She sought to expand the horizons of her other children's hearts through such messages.

The inspiration that exists before you begin on an effort is nothing but the miracle of God. This way Amma sought to indicate that the One who witnesses all that happens as the *raison d'etre*.

'Do not abuse anyone, do not praise anyone. Whoever does whatever, is all due to the inspiration of God.' On one occasion, speaking thus, Amma revealed that *'We are all matters for causes that prime the Universe.'*

When some devotee pleaded, 'Please bail us out of these sufferings', Amma advised, *'Whether it is happiness or suffering, both are God given, and therefore are God's blessings. All the vicissitudes in life are also blessings of God.'*

'Please improve my situation,' pleaded brother Appa Rao once. *'You are fine now. And have had been so always,'* saying thus, Amma reminded him of the *non-causal form of God.*

'Not to temples, but to slums we should go. Come on.' Amma demonstrated that all are her children irrespective of social and economic status. More importantly, she conveyed her wish that those who are underprivileged needed attention, help and compassion. When she visited the juvenile home, she recognised the inmates longing for parents' love. She said, 'Children, do you want to see your mother? I am your mother.' She turned towards Doctor Amaleswara Rao and asked him to take care of children as father and mother.

When brother Appa Rao pleaded for giving him strength to battle life, she reminded him that *'the needed strength is in his person already. It is awaiting your recognition and tapping.'*

When brother Appa Rao lost his oil goods due to a theft, Amma called up brother Appa Rao's wife Smt. Kusumamba, and re-assured her, saying, *'Do not worry. I am here to set right everything.'* This was her way of supporting her children when they seem to face abyss.

Someone complained to Amma saying that some others were committing mistakes. Amma demonstrated the need to develop and possess a large heart, especially within a 'family' by saying that, *'a mother doesn't find mistakes in her children.'* On another occasion, she remarked, *'You are the doer, but the action is not yours'* aiming to inspire people for self-inquiry through recognition of the Ultimate Reality that is described in some sense as egolessness, non-subjectivity and non-objectivity.

'Grant me Enlightenment, Amma,' asked a devotee. To which Amma's response was, *'Enlightenment is not something that someone can grant. The ability to see Everything as That is Enlightenment.'*

Poojakoti samam stotram stotrakoti samamjapaha
Japakoti samam dhyanam dhyanakoti samam layaha.

Brother Appa Rao elevated himself to great heights in the process of self-inquiry by trying to comprehend and put in practice the various messages given by Amma from time to time. *'You are just a witness to all the happenings,'* is something he has started doing and achieved good success. He understood the difference between our materialistic philosophy and Amma's spirituality. Amma's explanation of '*All is That'* through the bangle helped him digest the vedic thought propounded by Amma.

This book has Amma's miracles galore. This book describes how, being in the protective ring of Amma, brother Appa Rao has gained back his wealth, money, vehicles, and health. He has described in detail how Amma responds to the needs of her children who are ever engaged in chanting. Adorned by pious qualities such as bhakti, dedication, surrender and inquisitiveness, brother Appa Rao has done a yeoman service to practitioners.

Beginning with hesitation that he can speak but has no ability to write, brother Appa Rao has successfully adopted a writing style that compels the reader to move on from chapter to chapter without putting down the book. The inspiration from Amma cannot have any less impact!

When he asked me, 'You are the poet-laureate of Amma. Why don't you write a few words as preface?' I got into thinking, I felt I could certainly knit all the flowers of experiences of brother with Amma, and her inspirations.

The inspiration is Amma. She is the one who binds all of us through her philosophy of compassion. With folded hands to Amma, and appreciation to brother Appa Rao, I offer this divine garland.

'Purushottam Putrabhargava'
PSR Anjaneya Prasad
Editor, Vishwajananee

Reflection

Having faced difficulties due to the death of my father during childhood, and incurring huge losses in business, I left home in desperation. When I recollect how our family deity Sri Simhachala Narasimhaswamy restored me to my home, my eyes swell with tears.

Amma has had been my guide directly and indirectly. It is my fortune that Amma has held my hand and helped me move forward in life. She guided me to alter my life path from '*sagunopasana'* to '*nirgunopasana'*; in fact, she instructed me that both the paths are the same. She said: ***Everything is That.*** Amma guided me how to experience ***Everything is That*** in the form of self-realisation through yoga. What can I say or write of Amma who helped me experience the bliss of salvation, that is, mukti?

This book is only about experiences bestowed on me by Amma. I have ventured to write this book only after developing sufficient self-confidence to the effect that what I understood of Amma's preachings, scriptures and experience are all in balance.

My Pranams are to Sri Velpuri Balaramanaswamy, who clarified my many doubts during the course of writing this book.

If the contents of this book provide even an iota of help to seekers in their karma - bhakti - yoga - jnana practice, then I consider my effort successful.

During the course of writing this book, Sri YH Ramakrishna, Sri Mallapragada Sreemannarayana, Dr. Suguna and sister Jhansi have clarified several of my doubts. My grateful thanks to every one of them; similarly, I am indebted to brother Kondamudi Sriramachandramurthi.

I also record my heartfelt gratitude to the Head of Vishwabandhu Tapovanam (Pedapulipaka) Math Sri Sri Sri

Vasudevanandagiri Swami, and to Mahapithadhipati (Pedamuthiva) Seetharam.

I offer my grateful thanks to brother Brahmandam Ravindra Rao, sister Vasundhara, Sarva Sri Potthuri Venkateswara Rao, Boppudi Ramabrahmam, PSR Anjaneya Prasad, Ganti Venkatarao and sister Smt. Kusuma Chakravarthi.

My friend Anagani Soubhagya Rao has extended me immense help in transposing my thoughts and feelings into words by working and re-working on the drafts till the right mix of words and sentences was achieved. He has ensured that the book has the right type of language for easy but perfect comprehension of what I wanted to say. I record my deep sense of gratitude to him.

My son-in-law Chakka Sreemannarayana has been a great source of encouragement for me to embark on the writing of this book. I appreciate him, my wife Kusumamba, my son Krishnababu and other family members.

My grateful thanks go to Kshirasagara Printing Press for producing the DTP in time, and to Brother 'Siva' who has taken up the task of giving a pleasing design to the book and its timely production with utmost dedication.

The spirit behind this book is that of Shirdi Sai. The offer of each script to Baba in the presence of brother Ramabrahmam, launch by Amma in the presence of brother 'Ravi'.

This is my good fortune.

Yours
In the service of Amma

T. Triloka Appa Rao
Eluru, January 25, 2007

Mumukshatvam[1]

I lost my father at the age of 11. Completed 8th standard at the age of 13 years when the entire responsibility of running the house fell on me. The school education halted. Having lost heavily in the business, got depressed, and started developing detachment from the world. I had compassion for all life forms along with devotion to God. My family has been spiritual, with daily prayers and religious practices. I used to perform '*Sandhyavandanam'*, read 'Bhagavad Gita' etc., incurred losses in business, and consequently lost interest in earthly matters. When I faced losses in business, I prayed God to bail me out. I used to write *'Rama koti*[2]*'*. Used to read religious stories, said my prayers regularly, and praise God with all devotion. Having been such a committed devotee and led a disciplined life, I was intrigued why I had to go through all these difficulties. It was all too much and beyond my capability. I turned towards renunciation.

Those days, Sri Ramadas, a staunch disciple of Sri Avadhootendra Saraswati from Brindavan used to frequent our house. He used to describe to us the Brindavan, the sages living there, and about the Ashram's activities. He shared the information about the spiritual discourses held daily. There

[1] Mumukshu, implies one who desires redemption from this *samsara*, that is, desires liberation. The state of such liberation is called mumukshatvam. He may be continuing to do his earthly duties as he strives to elevate himself spiritually. As long as the discharge of earthly functions is not seen as an end in itself, and does not come in the way of mumukshatvam, he would still be considered as a mumukshu.

[2] The practice of writing the name of 'Sri Ram' every day for a certain amount of time in a special book that is offered to any Ram Temple such as in Bhadrachalam. The concept is the total dedication, physical and mental, to the remembrance of (any) god.

were basic facilities provided free for all practitioners. This information made an impact on me.

On some other occasion, I happened to listen to the discourse of Sri Omkaraswamy, the Head of Shanti Ashram. The Swamy has Ashrams in the hills of Kondapalli and Vishakhapatnam. Sri Omkaraswamy has informed that they too provide all the basic facilities to seekers along with imparting necessary training.

One day I was reading the life story of Dhruva. Right at the age of 5, Dhruva has carried out rigorous penance displaying rare perseverance till God appeared before him. Inspired by the story and driven by passion, I left home without informing anyone for Brindavan, carrying just a set of clothes, and a few spiritual books including Bhagavad Gita. As I reached Vijayawada, it occurred to me that, in Brindavan, the discourses and training are held in Hindi. As I do not know Hindi, I decided that I should rather go to visit Sri Omkaraswamy's Shanti Ashram.

After saying my prayers for salvation at Annavaram, I set off for Shanti Ashram. I came to know that Swamiji was away at his Vishakhapatnam Ashram. I changed my course of travel. On the way, as I remembered my wife, tears rolled down my eyes profusely. I was 24 years of age at that time, and my wife was 19. I also remembered my infant child who had just started walking. However, I knew that if I go back home, my lenders will not spare me. I prayed God fervently. I reached Vishakhapatnam the next day morning, had darshan of our family deity Sri Varaha Narasimha Swamy at Simhachalam Shrine. Then I left for Shanti Ashram.

The Lord's Darshan!!

Our family deity is Simhachala Narasimha Swamy. I was born to my parents after they prayed Simhachala Swamy for blessing them with a child. My '*Aksharabhyasam*[3]', *'Anna prasana*[4]' and ear piercing have all been conducted here in this temple itself.

On reaching Simhachala, I took bath in the 'Puttudhara' stream, and completed my morning prayers in the temple premises. At this time, a temple priest appeared before me; he was well-built, exuding divine grace from his visage. He had long, dense flowing hair, and a shining body. He appeared to be of middle-age. He inquired about me affectionately. I was writing my dairy when he came visiting me.

Swamy: What are you writing?

Me: Dairy.

Swamy: Did you take leave of your family before you came here?

Me: (did not want to lie) That is unnecessary for you.

Swamy: Did you eat anything?

Me: No.

Swamy: I am head of this temple. My name is 'Narasimha Charyulu'. Shall I get you some '*prasadam*' to eat?

Me: Ok, I will have.

[3] The writing of 'Om' and 'Sri' by the child for the first time with the help of father or guru marks the launch of education for the child.

[4] This is the name of a function held when an infant is fed rice (the staple food in south India) for the first time.

Swamy has organised for rice *prasadam* cooked on firewood from '*prasadam* sale outlet' about 100 yards from there.

Swamy: Where are going from here?

Me: To Shanti Ashram.

Swamy: Why?

Me: In search of salvation, Mukti.

Swamy: Looks like you are in difficulties. Our Temple God likes '*panakam'* very much. Would you offer '*panakam*' to Him if your difficulties are taken care of?

Desperate to get rid of my difficulties, I said that I will offer '*panakam*' and then only leave this place. He immediately led me to the temple office; since the time for booking order for *prasadam* for the day was over, I placed order for the next day. I gave the receipt to Swamy and requested him to offer the '*panakam*' (sweet juice) the next day.

Swamy: You said you will offer yourself and then only leave this place. I will make arrangements for your stay.

Then he took me to the adjacent Timmanna Shresty Choultry, and arranged for my stay and food. It was around 11 am.

Swamy: Would you like to have food now? There is a hotel around here?

Me: No (since I do not like hotel food).

Swamy: At 12 noon, there is an offering of '*Mahaprasadam'* to the Lord. That *prasadam* is distributed among the priests. If you pay 5 annas (31 paise), they will give you rice, dal, rasam and curry, which is much more than one can normally

eat. Curd is sold nearby. Buy for one anna[5], it will be sufficient for you.

He also organised for milk in the night for me.

That day afternoon I started reading the book 'Bhakta Vijayam'. Other employees from the choultry were also there. Later, in the night, I was given one full glass of milk. The next day, I got up at 3 am, took bath in the 'Puttudhara' stream, came back to my room, and completed my morning prayers. At 8 am, Swamy came to see me, and insisted that I write a letter to my family. We discussed several things which I do not remember. Swamy did not allow me to go to Shanti Ashram that day.

The next day, Swamy instructed the temple staff not to restrict my entry into temple any time I wished. I went into the temple, and was chanting *'Om Narasimhaya Namah'* (salutations to Lord Narasimha). In the meanwhile, a Swamy (priest) came and sat beside me. He said, 'my dear son, this is not the way. You recite *'Karavalamba Stotram';* he dictated the stotram which I noted down. For the next 4-5 days, I continued to stay there and recited the *'Karavalamba Stotram'.*

Swamy advised me: *Wherever you go, you cannot escape reaping of what you have done*. He sermonised a lot which I do not remember. He used to exhort me to go back home, or keep writing letters to my home. More or less, this was the trend of our discussions every day.

I also had a desire to go home. But since I left home without informing anyone, my ego came in the way of going back on my own. However, Swamiji exhorted me to write a letter to a friend. Shortly thereafter, he persuaded me to go back home as early as possible. Finally, my letter reached my friend. My brother was informed about my whereabouts; my brother sent

[5] During those days, 16 *annas* used to make one rupee.

a relative and a friend Nomula Chinaramaiah garu who encountered us when we were getting down the steps. We all climbed down the steps.

Then Swamiji asked us to take '*prasadam*' before leaving. The 'place' where we were given our *prasadam* was behind the building located in front of the path housing the steps. That was the inside of a tiled house. After a little while, a woman wearing a silk saree in the traditional way, with a big vermilion on her forehead, brought us something like *upma* made out of rice flour. As I was leaving, Swamiji blessed me saying that my problems will be solved in forty days.

Back in my town, my brother managed not to reveal the fact of my leaving home to anyone. He gave out an impression to everyone that I was away on a business trip. Even my wife and mother were kept under that impression.

After I reached home, within a few days, the pressure of my creditors has increased. I organised a meeting of all creditors. I handed over a list of my assets to three respected elders, and with their help settled all the loans.

Nevertheless, within a month of my returning home, I had not only managed to solve the issue of outstanding loans, but also secured a job in a rice mill that paid adequate salary. Within forty days, my life settled as prophesied by the Priest at Simhachalam. I wanted to express my gratitude and pay respects to the Priest Sri Narasimha Charyulu. Accordingly, my mother and I reached Simhachalam shortly. We went to the place in Simhachalam where I was given my last '*prasadam*' by the Head Priest. The tiled house was not there! That was just an empty space. Wonderstruck, I inquired with the neighbours about the house. They replied that there never was a house in that place. I was shocked! I could not control my emotions when I realised that the one who spoke with me was possibly the Lord Narasimha himself!! We reached the choultry and

inquired with the people in there. Our conversation went like this.

Me: Do you remember me?

Choutry inmates: Oh, why not? We do remember you.

Me: Where is the person who introduced me to you, and asked you to take care of me?

Choultry inmate: He is here only. He is the temple head.

We all went to meet the temple head on my request. There was no similarity between the one I met and this person.

Me: Sir, do you know me?

Swamy replied that he does not know me. He said his name was Rangachary. The person whom I met was 6 feet tall, well-built, with a long beard, and radiance all around him. The person whom I am now introduced as the head of temple is 5½ feet tall, and with wheatish complexion. The choultry staff was insisting that the person who introduced me was none other than this man.

It was now confirmed that the 'person' who introduced me was none other than Lord Narasimha himself. The God himself 'came down' to bless me!

Although the act of renunciation that arose in me before leaving for Simhachala was due to an emotional decision, the spirit included in it the desire for salvation. The Benevolent Lord has blessed me having come in the form of a human being.

While I had my initiation through Lord Rama and Sita, this incident has strengthened my belief in God further. The result is that I am at the Lotus feet of Amma.

Who is This Amma?

Lecture of Sri Kandukuri Sivananda Murty

I was fortunate enough to attend the lecture of Siva Sri Kandukuri Sivananda Murty in Jillellamudi on June 12, 2005.

While speaking about 'Creation', the Swamy said that Lord has not created Universe to cater to his happiness; because Lord himself is an embodiment of happiness. What further happiness would He derive from Creation? Then why did he create the universe? He created the Universe because he wanted to provide guidance to life forms to proceed towards salvation by going through various stages of life.

He further dwelt on aspects such as: Who is Amma? Why did She arrive on this earth?

He explained that Amma is the form that existed even before the Trimurtis (Brahma, Vishnu, Siva) emerged. She is the Kali, which implies that She is the embodiment of everything.

Amma reveals the secrets of Upanishads in simple, seemingly innocuous statements. She quips: *there is nothing called previous birth or future birth*. In this context, her message to her devotees is: *Just desire, and you will come and fall into my lap; you will not go back to earth.*

The depth of Amma's philosophy, although seemingly simple, is not easily discernible to the mind. The sayings if comprehended by the intellect are carried to the inner soul. By following the path shown by Amma, one can not only spend this life happily, but also attain salvation.

On one occasion, Amma recollected one of her childhood incidents, thus: A buffalo was suffering from some interminable pain. Amma touched it saying, 'Are you still here?' No sooner than Amma touched her did the Soul left her body!!

The uniqueness of Jillellamudi Amma is that, while all mortal mothers desire a permanent abode for their children here on earth, this Mother takes them along with Her to heaven bestowing *jnana* and consequently freedom to the yearning souls!

One attains the proximity to God through a long, excruciating path of penance (*tapas*, or austerity), yearning and unflinching devotion, which is attained by very few. Although we do not carry out any such penance, sacrifice or yogic practice, Mother takes us all into her lap, unconditionally. If we totally surrender to her recognising our own limitations, then her guidance is understood completely.

All those who visit Jillellamudi are fed by Amma in her Ashram. Some are more fortunate to have been actually fed food by her. This is Amma's way of absolving us of all sins from our past births. Thus, we will not have re-birth.

There are three ways of obtaining salvation irrespective of our qualifications, or carrying out sadhana: One, by visiting the holy place *Kashi*, two, by visiting *Ujjain*, and three, by visiting *Jillellamudi*. Jillellamudi is the abode of Shakti (the Universal Force); it is a place for attaining salvation. Chant the name of Amma, visualising her form - an embodiment of compassion, and Amma shall dissolve you into her fold with a smile.

Some persons ask: *Where is Amma? Where has she gone?*

Swamiji continued his discourse to pronounce that at the outset, she has not gone anywhere. Amma is right here and continues to bless all of us.

Amma is Sri Rama - Sri Rama is Amma

I do not remember clearly, but it was probably in the year 1957 that I arrived in Jillellamudi for the first time along with Polisetty Kumaraswamy and Tumuluri Venkatapichaiah.

Sadhunaam darshanam punyam
Sparshanam papanashanam
Sevanam Mokshadayakam

I heard this sloka somewhere. Inspired by this, I used to visit great souls for their darshan and blessings. My visit to Jillellamudi was one of such attempts. The first time I saw Amma in the thatched temple of Sri Hyma, I did not have any notable feeling for Amma. However, I felt a unique peaceful state of mind in her presence. There was something that made me visit her again and again. Till the year 1961, I used to visit Jillellamudi now and then for her darshan.

I got initiation of 'Sri Rama Mantram' by the head of the Agaram Ashram, Sri Segu Krishnada, a disciple of Sri Sri Sri Malayala Swamy.

Due to the burden and pressures of materialistic life, it was becoming difficult for me to continue regularly with my spiritual activities such as '*sandhyavandanam'*, *gayatrijapa,* and Gita recital. I had a strong sense of renunciation and desired to retreat into an Ashram life for seeking salvation. However, God did not wish the same for me yet. At this time, I got in touch with Sri Sri Sri Avadhootendra Saraswati Swamy who initiated me into a *'moola mantra'* and asked me to chant it incessantly. I tried to do so. However, whenever I was engaged in some earthly activity, the chanting used to get obstructed. Realising this a little later, I used to resume chanting. After a lapse of time, I realised that the chanting was going on in the

background of my mind without my knowledge or effort. It became so natural to me that I was chanting it even in my dreams. You might ask, how was I able to know that I was chanting in my dreams? This is because when I used to get up any time from sleep, I found myself chanting the mantra. My spiritual routine became regular with some offerings to God, with a prayer to help me progress on the spiritual path.

I developed a strong faith that all my physical and spiritual needs will be taken care of by my Lord Sri Ramachandra. That is why, I used to pray to Him and share my problems with Him; I used to get indications of solutions to my problems. This way, ten years have lapsed; Lord Rama has become my father, mother and God.

It was the year 1971. Those days, there was a lot of talk about Amma and her 'miracles'. Having heard about this, I desired to visit Amma and have her darshan.

That was a big hall; Amma was seated on a throne. Many devotees were offering puja to Amma. Standing at a corner of the hall, I was observing keenly all the goings-on. Shortly, Amma fixated her sight on me. I felt a surge of power across my body. I felt that my ego was crushed, and felt a new, purified Me. Without my knowledge, I touched the Lotus feet of Amma and felt that they are nothing but the same feet of my Lord Sri Rama. I recited *'Sri Rama Ashtotharam'* while showering flowers on her feet. I desired that this puja should directly reach my Rama.

At this instant, a thought crossed my mind. Why should I pray someone else when I am Ramabhaktha? How can I install Amma in place of my own deity? A dilemma started in my mind. But, soon with her magnetic charm motherly love, Amma obsessed my heart. Ever since, Amma has been with me.

However, often, when I was not in Jillellamudi, my heart longed to go back to see Amma. A strange dilemma used to

envelope my mind. With increasing visits to Jillellamudi and obsession with Amma, and reduced visits to Bhadrachalam, it felt that I was moving away from my Lord Sri Rama. One day I set off to visit Bhadrachalam. After taking bath in the river Godavari, I went and sat down in the temple premises.

The surroundings were serene. My mind was calm and peaceful. The priests have removed the clothes of Lord Sri Rama for conducting early morning bathing rituals. I had the unique darshan of Lord Sri Rama with Sri Sita adorning his left side. When the curtains were drawn over the idol of Lord Sri Rama and Sri Sita in the sanctum sanctorum, I felt a barrier being installed between me and my Lord Rama.

My eyes were swelling with tears, and the throat was getting choked. 'Swamy! Ramachandra! Why are you letting me go away from you?' My heart pleaded with Him. Gradually, I became indifferent and mind turned still. For me, there is only one Amma, that is Sitamma. My mind got into thinking and asked a question: Is Sitamma the (Jillellamudi) Mother? I did not get an answer. There was silence; I was in a state of listlessness. At that very instant, I heard a voice from the sanctum sanctorum which said, '*Amma, Amma, Amma*' three times.

It suddenly dawned on me that Lord Sri Rama, the Compassionate, has had been guiding me and protecting me all these years in the form of Amma of Jillellamudi. No sooner this awakening dawned on me than my heart was filled with joy. With a settled mind, I returned to Eluru, where I had a rice mill. Those days, Sri Ramabrahmam was working as a manager in Andhra Bank. Sri Ramabrahmam is a great soul, a stoic, and a selfless human being. Honesty is his sterling embellishment. He has read and comprehended in depth the literature and sayings of Amma. We became close as friends and brothers with the blessings of Amma, and are so till date.

One day, I described my experience of Bhadrachalam to brother Ramabrahmam. I told him about hearing a word three times in the sanctum sanctorum, but did not remember to mention the word 'Amma' as I had almost forgotten about the same. After some time, Sri Ramabrahmam went to Jillellamudi for having darshan of Amma. He was sitting by the side of Amma. They were discussing about the topic, 'faith'.

Amma reportedly remarked cryptically, '*Appa Rao has come to me after doing a lot of research'.*

Ramabrahmam said, 'Yes, Amma, he felt that he heard the words, *'That is Amma herself'* thrice'. Amma declared, '*Yes, my son, not only did he feel but he also heard the words thrice'*. Notably, I have not revealed this incident to anyone except to Sri Ramabrahmam. Not even to Amma. It was just my personal experience not known to anyone else. In fact, I forgot the fact that I heard the words thrice. It was amazing that something which no one knew was known to Amma. In fact, I too recollected the actual details only after Amma remarked with Sri Ramabrahmam. This incident reinforced my belief that Amma is All Knowing, All Pervasive, and Omniscient. I prayed to her with my tears. She protected me like a Mother, like a Father. She is Everything for me.

True Form of Amma

That was early hours of September 7, 2003, at around 3.30 am. My wife Kusumamba was suffering from excruciating pain in the knee. She felt that her leg turned heavy, and was not able to even move it. The previous day, on 6th, while praying before Amma's portrait in the puja room, she pleaded, 'Amma, the navaratri (9 days) festival is approaching; the pain in my leg is so much, and it is not reducing. How can I offer puja to you?'

That day we used homeopathic medicine. Instead of subsiding, the pain increased manifold. During the night in the early hours she woke me up and complained about her excruciating pain; she was getting frustrated with life. I could not bear to see her plight; I placed my palm on the spot where she had pain, and prayed fervently: 'Amma shall give you solace', so saying I focused my vision on that spot. At that time, I felt a divine force emerging from my hand, entered her knee, went down her leg in circular motion. My wife told me that the pain reached the foot; again from foot, it gently entered the knee to stay for a while and disappeared. My wife slipped into sleep. Maybe that was not sleep but a sort of trance due to sudden relief from severe pain. She woke up ten minutes later and remarked: 'Amma heard my plea. She came out of the temple from the idol and gently caressed my leg. Now I feel so light; my pain has subsided completely'. Sometime ago, when we visited her in Jillellamudi, during some conversation, Amma remarked that she was now in the spirit form. My wife asked her what was the form of the spirit? To which Amma said, 'You will come to know in due course of time'. Perhaps this is her way of demonstrating the spirit form.

Amma gave my wife a physical manifestation of experience while I received the same in the form of spiritual experience; I was wondering as to what exactly is the form of Amma. I later came to the conclusion that Amma exists in all forms. There is no specific one form that we could limit her to.

Amma - The One Who Loves Chanting

After the siddhi of Hyma, Amma introduced chanting, her most favoured activity, by lighting an incessant lamp[6]. From that day onwards, the chanting goes on without any break.

On November 10, 1979, the Vishwajananee Trust organised the recital of Lalitha Koti Nama Archana a million (that is, a crore) times. From that day onwards, on every Monday and Friday, it has become a ritual to recite the name of Sri Lalitha a hundred thousand (that is, a lakh) times. Alongside, '*Ekaham*' also is conducted.

During 1984, Sri Ramadas, the disciple of Sri Raghuvaradas and my family stayed for ten days in the Brindavan Ashram of Sri Prabhudatta Brahmachary. In Brindavan, a lot of significance is attached to *'nama sankirtana'* so also in many other Ashrams. Usually, the *sankirtan* is carried out to the accompaniment of music; in some places, devotees also dance to the *sankirtan*.

After witnessing the '*sankirtan*' in Brindavan, I desired that a similar '*sankirtan*' should happen in Jillellamudi. I discussed this with Amma. She agreed and asked me to find a family who could conduct '*sankirtan*' devotedly. I suggested that if we contact Sri Sri Ram, a disciple of Sri Raghuvaradas in Karamchedu Ashram, he would organise. Upon our request, Sri Ram organised for continuous chanting of *Hare Rama* during October 22-29, 1984. In this Sapthaham, the disciples of Sri Avadhootendra Saraswati Swamy participated in turns. The Sapthaham was organised in the august presence of Sri Laxmana Yatindra Swamy. Entire Jillellamudi reverberated with the chants of *Hare Rama* under the guidance of Sri Ram. Subsequently, the family of Pillalamarri Padmavathi settled

[6] A lamp that is always burning or glowing.

down in Jillellamudi for the purpose of chanting. After the completion of the Sapthaham, Amma expressed the desire to witness Saptha Sapthaham *'before she leaves'*. As per desire of Amma, Sri Ram and Sri Laxmana Yatinda organised seven weeks of *'Kalisantarana Maha Mantra'* from 9th February to 22nd March 1985 chanting '*Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare'.* While the chanting took place during the daytime, there was *'Ramaleela'* during the night. This was a new experiment. Devotees also danced during the chanting. The celebrations were marked by discourse by Sri Ram on Ramayana. Interspersed with the discourse were dances and chants. This form of bhakti is commonly exhibited in North India. People refer the discourse on Lord Sri Ram as Ram Leela, and Krishna Leela for discourse on Lord Krishna. Amma also used to witness these events every day. While witnessing these celebrations, a thought occurred in my mind; one day, we should also have Amma history played out to the accompaniment of song and dance.

I expressed my desire with Sri Ram. If someone can write Amma's lifestory, he said he could organise a similar play. Brother Ramakrishna also concurred with the idea and said that he too cherishes such a desire.

I immediately rushed to Amma and took her permission, and her witnessing the show when it is played out. When I informed brother Ramakrishna about this, he was excited and wrote the story within a day under the title '*Jayahomata*'! Under the training and able direction of Sri Ram, Amma's lifestory was enacted on the last day of the celebrations with actors drawn from the Ashramites themselves. Amma left this abode on June 12, 1985. Only after this event did I realise the import of Amma's statement - that she wanted to witness Sapta Sapthaham 'before she leaves' (her physical form).

Mother of All Life Forms

Jillellamudi was one of the many villages that were severely damaged by the disastrous cyclone of 1977. Houses got damaged rendering thousands homeless. Rivers and streams were in spate causing inundation everywhere. The 'House of All' was surrounded by a vast expanse of water. Even cooking became difficult in the kitchen of the 'House of All'. Nevertheless, Amma ensured that human beings and their animals are provided food and shelter in her Ashram.

After the cyclonic effect subsided, I reached Jillellamudi and sat at the feet of Amma. Amma shared her pain thus: 'Due to this cyclone, the metal sheets of the dining hall were swept away. If any of these sheets had hit any animal, it could have been damaging or even fatal. My son, all these animals were crying out 'Amba'! No one bothered to go and untie them, but everyone goes in the morning for milking the animals. Fortunately, no animal got hurt.'

'When we are in pain, we share our pain with you. Who do these poor animals share their pain with?' I asked Amma to which she replied: 'They tell their mother!' Amma is the Mother of All Life Forms!!

Nothing is Impossible for Amma

My wife Kusumamba and I went to Jillellamudi to carry out '*Anasuyavratham*'. That was my birthday. That day morning, Amma anointed us with oil on our head, applied vermilion on our forehead, garlanded, donned us some flowers and clothes, fed us sweet rice *(payasam)*, idlis, and finally drinking water. She wiped our mouth after our food, and told us: 'My dear children, come and celebrate your birthday every year in Jillellamudi.'

The same day in the evening, we offered our prayers to the Lotus feet of Amma, and conducted '*Anasuyavratham*'. The morning programmes were completed. Around 10 am., a resident of Eluru, Sri Padmanabhuni Narayana garu, aged about 60 years, came to Jillellamudi for the darshan of Amma. I know him very well. He was exhilarated with the darshan of Amma. Amma asked him to stay back, and do Anasuya *Vratham*. To which he replied that he has frequent urination problem, and therefore cannot endure the duration of the *Vratham*. Further, he cannot also bear delay in having food due to his diabetes issue.

Those days, the rooms were available only in the 'House of All'. The rooms had no toilets. One had to climb down the steps for using the toilet. In view of the diabetes problem of Narayana garu, and the amenities issue, I could not insist on them to stay back. I informed about this to Amma. Amma said, 'there would not be any problem, ask them to stay back.' Having faith in Amma, Sri Narayana stayed back.

In this context, Amma revealed a subtle aspect of *dharma*[7]: Let them take food and carry out the *Vratham*; others can have light snacks. In the evening, we all carried out the *Vratham* in the presence of Amma in the serene atmosphere. That night, surprisingly, Sri Narayana did not get up even once for urination; he got up only after dawn for his morning ablutions.

Those days, there were ten taps in series for devotees to take bath near the rooms on the ground. The water was supplied from a storage tank through a pipeline. I was taking bath under one tap, and Sri Narayana was taking bath under another adjacent tap. While I was shivering due to the cold water from the tap, Sri Narayana was taking bath comfortably. When he noticed my shivering, Sri Narayana inquired: why are you shivering when the water is hot? I was surprised but said, 'the water is so cold!' It was his turn to be surprised. He said, 'Why, the water is hot. Why are you saying the water is cold?' I put my hand under his tap, and found that the water was sufficiently hot for a comfortable bath in that season.

I could not but reiterate my belief in Amma that she knows how to provide comfort to her children. After a comfortable, happy stay, Sri Narayana took leave of Amma and left for his home.

[7] The Freedictionary defines '*dharma*' as (a) The Principle or Law that Orders the Universe; (b) Individual conduct in conformity with this principle, and (c) The essential function or nature of a thing.

Appearance of a Dead Son

During 2004, River Krishna had its periodic spate (*pushkar*) that occurs once in twelve years. Sri Vishwajananee Parishad of Jillellamudi has organised a service camp for pilgrims in the house of Sri Chakka Chandrasekhara Rao in Vijayawada. In this camp, free food facility was provided for pilgrims; discourses were also organised alongside.

One day, while I was giving a discourse, the daughter-in-law of Sri Sharabhayya (the person who constructed temples in Satyanarayanapuram) visited the Centre. All her family members were devotees of Amma. Looking at her intent devotion, I asked her if she has seen Amma. She said, 'We are all devotees of Amma'. She continued to recall an incident that took place before 1960. 'My sister's son, aged seven years, one day died all of a sudden. My sister was in agony, weeping day in and day out, and did not have food too. We could not bear her plight. We thought if we could take her to Amma, her pain might subside. Since we have affinity to Amma, my sister could not control her emotions on seeing Amma and wept uncontrollably. She caught hold of Amma, and shaking her said, 'If you are really the Mother, how can you do this to me? How come you take away my son.' Amma consoled her. It was a week since my sister had any food. Since Amma asked us to take food, all of us had food and returned to Amma's presence.

Then, Amma told my sister, 'I will show you your son, can you go there? Look there!' When we saw that side, a boy was seen playing by going in circles around a pole nearby. My sister saw the boy and recognised him as her son. He was wearing the same clothes as at the time of his death. In the meanwhile, a car came by, took the boy and went away. My sister was aghast! Subsequent to this, my sister calmed down. This is how it seems Amma's blessings have worked on her.

A Reformer *par excellence*

That was probably the year 1977. I was in a disturbed state of mind. I felt like going to some pilgrimage centre. At that time, Sri Chakka Chandrasekhara Rao of Vijayawada was in Mantralaya on a 40-day '*deeksha'* (consecration, initiation).

The main entrance of the temple has a full size oil painting of Sri Raghavendra on the left side. I offered my heartfelt obeisance to the portrait that looked live with brilliance. This temple is famous for devotees offering circumambulance by prostrating on 8 sides. I too started doing this. When I prostrated on the north-eastern corner, I felt waves of divine energy flow through my body bringing in some sort of equanimity. My body was in the control of a divine force. I did not have physical consciousness, only awareness.

At that very moment, I saw Amma seated on a throne. On either side of her were Sri Narasimha Swamy and Sri Raghavendra Swamy. As I was seeing this image, I felt that a divine force thrust an invisible *Trishul* (trident) in my stomach and heart, twisted it and pulled out my intestines and muscles. I groaned as I was experiencing a painless pain. This pain was surprisingly not related to my physical body. My groan was coming from unfathomable depths. I have been a witness to all this happening. People crowded around me. I was able to hear their words as if coming from a long distance. My body was not in my control. I could neither get up nor talk. After spending 20 minutes in this state, I returned to my previous (conscious) state. Now I am no more a witness to any event. My body is now under my control. I got up from my lying posture and sat down with a feeling that some heavy burden has been removed from my body.

My body felt light. Mind was at peace. With folded hands, I prayed God whole heartedly. When I shared this incident with

saints I met, they explained, 'It is not easy to get rid of the desires accumulated over several births in the mind. You can get rid of them only with severe penance, or with the help of saints. While these unwanted desires are being uprooted, the subtle or astral body (*sukshma sharira*) undergoes some suffering.'

The thoughts and feelings related to the image themselves are the building units of the subtle body. It was an overwhelming experience to realise that Amma had been benevolent to me in removing all my *karmas* from all my births so far; I was extremely glad to know that the pain I endured and the groans I let out during the experience are nothing but indications of my salvation.

I paid my obeisance to the Lotus feet of Amma for all the benevolence showered upon me.

The Secret of Yoga Practice Communicated through a Dog

There was a good yoga practitioner named Moorala Narayana Rao. He was my good friend. He used to visit saints and sages, and spend time with them discussing various nuances of the spiritual domain. He has reached a certain level in yoga practice. Nevertheless, he was not sure of how to control breath in order to reach a higher level. He believed that he needed the help of an elevated yoga practitioner. He instantly felt the image of Amma in his mind. He immediately reached and asked me to inform him when I plan to visit Jillellamudi the next time. He expressed his desire to clarify his doubt in yoga with Amma.

Both of us went to Jillellamudi, and were seated in the benign presence of Amma. Throughout my conversation with Amma, he sat silently. I did not broach his topic with Amma. In time, he indicated that we should leave.

I said, 'You have not asked Amma your question?' To my utter surprise, he said that he has already asked Amma and that she has already answered his question. I inquired, 'What was her response?' He explained to me: 'Did you notice that a dog came when you were conversing with Amma? (That was true). 'Have you noticed what the dog has done?' I said, 'Yes, it appeared as if it inhaled deeply through the nose.' 'Amma indicated that the pranayam which I wanted to do should be like that. Amma demonstrated it through the dog.'

I was totally surprised at Amma's intriguing ways of communicating with her devotees, and responding to their requirements. I paid my obeisance to Amma.

Tumour is Also a Child

It was July 17, 1975, Aashaadha Shuddha Dwadashi, evening about 4 o'clock. I reached Jillellamudi. Scores of devotees were crowding on either side of the steps to the Ashram of Love (*Vatsalyalayam*). Their faces were gloomy, sadness writ all over their faces. In the meanwhile, I received a message from the Amma's abode, asking for from Eluru to be sent upstairs. I was surprised how Amma came to know about my arrival, that too within five minutes of my reaching there. Again, I thought Amma is All Knowing. Thinking so, I went upstairs. There too, people were restless. I wondered what the matter could be. When I inquired someone, I was told that Amma was going to Nellore along with Dr. Subba Rao.

My birthday was on *thrayodasi*, which means the next day. During my last year birthday celebrations, Amma asked me to celebrate my birthday in Jillellamudi every year. Since the *thrayodasi* next day was from 11 am, I reached Jillellamudi the previous day. Amma has developed a tumour on her one buttock. She was suffering for a long time. She was not able to sit also. To enable her to sit through darshan, devotees have arranged a scooter tube to elevate that side on the chair, propped up with cushions on either sides. All this was covered with a bed sheet. She was giving darshan this way. She was exhorted by her confidantes to stop giving darshan for some time, to which she did not agree. She was enduring the pain but did not want to be away from her children. Having come to know that Amma was not well, Dr. SV Subba Rao from Nellore, and Dr. Keshava Rao from Narsapuram have arrived.

After examining the tumour, Dr. Subba Rao felt sad at Amma's suffering. However, Amma tried to assuage his pain saying, 'Tumour is also my child, my son'. Dr Subba Rao requested Amma to allow him to take her to Nellore for

treatment of the tumour. But how can Amma travel to Nellore with that tumour?

It occurred to Dr Subba Rao that he could operate her tumour in Jillellamudi itself and take her to Nellore for further treatment. What about anaesthesia and equipment for surgery? Amma recognised his thoughts and said, 'There is no need for anaesthesia. Take a blade and operate.' Initially, Dr Subba Rao could not muster courage. However, upon coaxing by Amma, he operated upon her using a blade. Subsequently, arrangements were being made for her travel to Nellore. In the meanwhile, Amma intervened and remarked, 'Appa Rao will come here today to celebrate his birthday. He will cry if he does not find me here.' I was overwhelmed with her concern for me even when she was going through pain and suffering.

Amma anointed me with oil, applied vermilion on my forehead, and flowers. Caressing my head, she said, 'My son, today is your birthday.' In fact, the *thrayodashi* had already entered. That is Mother's way of demonstrating her love and empathy!

I was so touched and overwhelmed by her love and affection that I washed her feet with my tears.

A Good Life is.....!

That was perhaps the year 1974 or 1975. One day three of us - Sri Kondamudi Sriramachandra Murthy, Sri Moorala Narayana Rao and another person (cannot recall the name) set off for Jillellamudi.

Our speeding car was approaching the Bacon Factory in Gannavaram. We suddenly heard agony filled moaning of a dog. We quickly realised that our car ran over a dog. We thought the dog must have certainly died. The car did not stop. I was upset at the incident. To overcome the guilt, I prayed Amma to give a better life to the dog which had died because of us. After reaching Jillellamudi, we had the darshan of Amma. I could not bear my pent up agony anymore. I shared with Amma about the death of the dog because of us.

At this juncture, Amma began to talk about life through a real incident. She said: There used to live two dogs here. One day one of the dogs, a bitch, gave birth to a litter. That day both the dogs fought with each other. In the fight, the other dog tore the breast of the bitch to the extent that blood was oozing out from the tear. Soon after the fight, the little dogs started suckling at the breast of their mother, and the mother was feeding them-in spite of the excruciating pain! The little ones were also sucking the blood mistaking it to be milk. My son, I do not see this level of concern and commitment among the human beings. How many mothers are breast feeding their infants?

Amma concluded abruptly expressing her anguish thus.

Renunciation Is Assumed Not Granted

The Head of the Mumukshu Jana Mutt Sri Sri Sri Laxmana Yatindra is a world renowned *Yateeshwar*[8]. He is one of the learned men that I have had been interacting for clarifying my numerous queries from time to time. He has guided me in many ways and on numerous occasions. He used to explain to me the hidden, insightful meaning of Amma's messages. I am a beneficiary of his paternal grace.

One day Sri Yatindra decided to arrive in Jillellamudi along with his family and entourage. I conveyed this message to brother Ramakrishna on phone. As planned, Sri Yatindra arrived in Jillellamudi on 11 February, 1979 along with his family. I too reached the Ashram. Brother Ramakrishna had already made arrangements for the visiting group under the advice of Amma. Subsequently, the group arrived to have darshan of Amma. Amma embraced each of them affectionately patting their backs. Each one felt inexplicable happiness and comfort in her presence, like a child in mother's secure and cosy lap. Despite not being in very good health, Amma appeared full of enthusiasm that day.

That evening, Sri Yatindra gave a discourse on 'Renunciation.' He demystified renunciation to basically mean *'concentrating in the matter'*.

While explaining the qualities of a *sanyasi*[9], Amma added that '*The way 'want' is a desire, 'not wanting' is also a desire'*.

'If you do not want to sleep on a cot, or if you do not want to wear white clothes, aren't these desires too?' she questioned.

[8] Yati means devoted; the most devoted among the yatis. Lord Indra among yatis.

[9] Ascetic.

'A sanyasi is one who is satisfied with whatever is available. He does not distinguish in terms of form or touch. It does not matter to him if he is staying in a house or in an ashram, wears saffron or white clothes. Renunciation is internal, my son!' Amma further clarified that, *'Family life is like fighting a battle by remaining within a fort. Therefore, those who feel that they cannot follow a disciplined life by being within the confines of family hood, tend to renounce the world.'*

People present there were pleasantly taken in to the unorthodox explanation given by Amma on the *sanyas*.

Ever wanting to listen to Amma, Sri Yatindra left Jillellamudi for his place with a heavy heart.

I am at Your Call!

That must have been the year 1990. I was engaged in wholesale oil business. It was a risky business. One day, my brother-in-law Rama Mohan Rao and son-in-law Raghavendra Rao were returning home on a two - wheeler vehicle carrying cash after shutting down the shop. A thief noticed that they were carrying money with them; he followed them and hit them with a stick at an opportune moment and started running away with money bag. Some passersby on noticing the robbery yelled out, 'thief, thief'. Shortly, someone called me up on phone and informed about the robbery. He said that both of my family members were unhurt, but the money is gone. I was immediately worried because if I lose the day's sale proceeds of three lakhs of rupees, I would simply be ruined. Not knowing what to do, I immediately prayed Amma for her protection. I can't say what Amma has done, but the thief, while running away, threw the money bag into the backyard of a house. Sooner, those who were chasing him, caught both the thieves, and recovered the cash bag. I got my money back. What more proof is required to say that Amma takes care of her children, and responds to their calls?

What is God?

While on tour in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, Amma gave a press conference on October 8, 1973 at 1.30 pm in the marriage hall of TTD in Labbipeta area of Vijayawada town. I was also present there. Sri Nalini Mohan, the sub editor of 'Vishalandhra', a popular Telugu daily newspaper, also reached the conference but a little after it began.

Amma always carries some eatables along with her when she goes out of Jillellamudi. During that tour too she carried *vada* and *paramannam*[10]. As soon as Sri Nalini Mohan entered the hall, she gestured to him to have the eatables she brought. However, he tried to refuse saying that he already had his lunch and that he is no more hungry. 'Doesn't a mother know if her child has not taken food?' So saying she fed him fondly. Sri Nalini Mohan was completely overwhelmed with her motherly touch and affection. He ate from the hand of Amma, and as tears rolled down his cheeks, he remarked, 'Amma, I thought that there is no God!'

Amma replied, 'You are better than me; you have at least realised that there is no God. I don't even know so far whether He exists, or how looks like'. Tears flowed down the cheeks of Sri Nalini Mohan uncontrollably. Amma continued affectionately with a smile, while caressing his head, 'One prays God in the form of an image in a portrait, another visualises Him in a form made out of turmeric, yet another installs an idol for worship. Everyone worships one's own label. Don't you think conceptualisation of the form is more important than the form itself?' Sri Nalini Mohan was completely taken in to Amma's simplistic way of communicating complex messages related to basic aspects of life while coating with nectar of her love.

[10] A sweet preparation with rice as the main ingredient, and offered to god.

Does *Effort* Exist or Not?

One evening while Amma was sitting silently, I inadvertently asked her, 'Does *Effort* exist or not?' Of course, there was some background to my inadvertent question to her. Amma used to say, *'There is nothing that is yours. Everything occurs as pre-determined.'* While scriptures proclaim existence of effort, Amma preaches the contrary. There must be some divine explanation for this different proclamation by Amma. So thinking, I continued, 'Although Sri Markendaya Maharshi did not have much lifespan, he did penance for Shiva, and achieved immortality. How can you say there is no Effort?'

Amma replied, with a smile, 'My dear son, that Markandeya has carried out penance for Shiva, gained his blessings, saved from death, and achieving immortality are all pre-determined'.

However, I was not satisfied. There must be some deeper meaning to this. I was sure that Amma would enlighten me at the appropriate moment. With that resolution, I returned to Eluru. However, the question was haunting me. I was rationalising: if I have to go to Jillellamudi, I have to get up, finish my chores, go to railway station, buy a ticket, and get into the train. Is this not an effort or a set of efforts? The question remained unanswered to my satisfaction. After a lapse of time, I once again wanted to see Amma. However hard I tried, I could not go. I made several attempts. Every time there was some obstacle. After two months, I could finally go to Jillellamudi.

Those days, the place where currently the 'Meditation Room' exists was a vacant place. The temple was not in existence. I sat down on the floor propped up to the eastern parapet wall. Amma was sitting on a cot along the western wall on the opposite side of the room. I decided that I must now ask

her my nagging question whatever may be the consequence. No sooner than I decided that I approached her.

Amma said, 'My dear son, as you were sitting at the wall, you thought that you must ask Amma now. As soon as you felt that, you came to me; this is called the Effort. There is nothing called your intervention in that.' She continued, 'There is an inspiration to your Effort. Try and understand where from that inspiration is coming'. I was flabbergasted. Amma's words worked like magic. I got my message and started my journey of exploration!

I recalled what Amma used to say,

'*When You and 'I' exist separately, Everything Exists;*
But when 'I' exists as I, then there is Nothing.'

I could comprehend the inner meaning of these words and focused my mind on my heart. As some practice, I succeeded. Then, I realised that everything was happening without my intervention or Effort. Probably, Amma wanted to communicate this truth, and therefore gave me this unique experience.

Pain is or the Body; Heart is Fine

Probably the year was 1980. I went to Jillellamudi to fulfil my desire of having one more darshan of Amma. When I went to *'Vatsalyalayam*[11]*'*, I was disturbed at the plight of Amma, who was suffering from cough. She was coughing with great difficulty. The phlegm in her throat was not getting expelled; Amma did not have enough strength to extern it out through cough. My eyes were filled with tears. I asked Amma, how was she doing. She said she was fine. Her reply was probably not to upset me because of her being in pain. Moving closer to her, I said, 'Amma, you are not well; you are not able to cough even. You are saying that you are well just to placate my concern.'

Amma took me into her fold, and caressing my head, said, 'My dear son, I said that I am all right; but did not say I did not have pain.' She explained further the inner meaning of her statement, *'Being well or not relates to heart; pain relates to the body.'*

Another devotee of Amma by name Kamalamma was conducting '*Ekaham*' in Eluru. When Kamalamma gets overwhelmed by devotion, her behaviour undergoes a change from normal. Noticing that I was very upset because of Amma's condition, that day, at 12 o'clock mid-night, Kamalamma remarked that Amma might appear to us to be in pain, but she is above pain. So saying, she placed her foot on my head. Immediately, I went into a trance. At the same time, my inner soul got detached from my body, and witnessed all the persons present in the house, including my own physical body. The bliss I enjoyed is beyond my ability to describe. Amma continues to handhold her devotees in their philosophical pursuit irrespective of their qualifications or attributes.

[11] Abode of Love

Where Can I Go Leaving You All?

Amma left her physical body on June 12, 1985. I was devastated on Amma's physical absence; the pain left me very weak. I used to relate my difficulties with Amma. Jillellamudi is now without Amma. Unable to visualise Jillellamudi without Amma, I used to pray every day in front of Amma's portrait in my house in Eluru.

In Jillellamudi, sister Vasundhara used to go to *'Vatsalyalayam'* and worship Amma. One day, Amma emerged out of the portrait and told her, 'Appa Rao is in pain there. He is not able to come here to Jillellamudi as he thinks that I am not here. Tell him not to worry.' Sister Vasundhara related this to brother Ramakrishna.

When I went to Jillellamudi subsequently, brother Ramakrishna remarked, 'Amma is much more upset than you are because of your physical and mental condition after she left her physical existence;' and he narrated what sister Vasundhara shared with him. On hearing this, my mind not only calmed down, but also started believing that Amma has not gone anywhere; she is very much in Jillellamudi.

The day before Amma was to give up her physical body, she made some statement with brother Ramakrishna, which is the eternal truth. 'Where do I go leaving you all? You may not see me, but I am always around taking care of you. That is the bounden duty of a Mother. Do not worry that I am not seen in physical form; I will appear to you any time you need me.'

Why Fear When I am Here?

My daughter Vani's childhood was full of difficulties and challenges. She stayed with Amma for six months and served her. Probably, this has helped her tide over her struggles. After marriage, Vani conceived in due course of time. Unfortunately, the boy was born with congenital heart defect. Within a month of being born, the infant died. Most surprisingly, within a month, Vani conceived again and delivered a baby boy on June 20, 1988. Strangely, this child also fell ill within one month of being born. He was taken to Guntur Hospital. The doctors put the child under observation for 4 days. Even after four days, there was no improvement in the health condition of the boy. My daughter Vani was reading 'Amma's life story' in the hospital and was praying. I left my daughter Vani, her mother and son-in-law back in the hospital and came away to Eluru, leaving everything to the mercy of Amma. Back home, I did not know what to do. I was in great pain. It was around 11 pm in the night. I stood in front of Amma's portrait and asked her why she is making me go through these difficulties that do not seem to end. 'Is it fair to put us in difficulty when we have faith in you? Is it difficult for you to save an infant's life?' Grief overtook me, and suddenly I thought, 'Amma, at least, can't you inspire the doctor to use an appropriate medicine?'

Coincidentally, at the same time, my daughter completed her reading of Amma's life story. Leaving everything in the hands of Amma, Vani slipped into sleep. Most surprisingly, Amma entered the hospital room through the door. My son-in-law was by the side of his infant who was on saline. He was holding the infant's hand to prevent its movement in order to avoid disturbing the saline drip arrangement. Addressing my son-in-law, Amma said, 'Why fear when I am here?' So saying, Amma disappeared!

Pleasantly shocked, my son-in-law woke up Vani, and told her excitedly, 'Amma herself came here; she granted us freedom from fear of our child.' From that instant onwards, my son-in-law became a staunch believer in Amma. His faith in Amma got strengthened. The couple believed that, 'As Amma cannot see her children suffer, she will certainly come anywhere, anytime'.

At the same time, it occurred to the doctor to use a particular medicine. He was surprised why he did not think of it till then. He immediately organised for that medicine administered it; by next morning, the severe infection started coming under control. When I called up the doctor early in the morning from Eluru, the doctor informed me that the child's life is now beyond danger. I felt that this miracle is because of my earnest prayer in front of Amma's portrait; my son-in-law's faith in Amma got reinforced, and he felt, Amma protects them.

My Feeding You is to Inculcate in You the Habit of Feeding Others

One of Amma's most repeated messages is: 'Eat what you have, satisfy yourself, and then share with others.' Throughout her existence in physical form, Amma has spread this message. She used to feed all those who came to her to their satisfaction, and gift clothes, irrespective of whether one is a learned person or an illiterate, rich or poor, child or adult. She used to derive utmost happiness in giving.

I too received gifts of clothes from her numerous times. I remarked with Amma that although I love to receive gifts from her as I consider them as *prasadam,* I am conscious of the financial burden on the Trust. Amma smiled and said, 'I am giving you clothes so that you will in turn do so to others.'

I understand the subtle message in Amma's action of giving gifts to others. She has been giving practical training to her children in the art of giving so that her children always care for each other to each one's best. This was a turning point in my life that threw more light on Amma's philosophy. Whatever one has, one should share with others. Whenever I gave some clothes as gifts to others, I noticed the spark in the receiver's eyes; that gave me enormous satisfaction and happiness.

What Amma sought to teach everyone through demonstration - giving food and clothes to others - if this could be adopted by everyone, would there be starving and shortage of clothes in this world?

The Child Lays the Mother's Path

During 1975, Amma was in the house of Dr. Subba Rao in Nellore undergoing treatment. Brother Ramakrishna was also with them.

One day, I received a telephone call from brother Ramakrishna. He wanted me to search for some medicines that went out of stock in Nellore; whether I could search for them in and around Eluru in stores for older stock as these medicines went out of production. Upon searching many medicine stores, I came to know that the stocks in Eluru were sold out. Immediately, I called up Gudivaka Namasshivayya, Vice President of Matrusri Adhyayana Parishad. His brother Sri GD Ramaiah was the Sales Manager for South India region for Glaxo Pharmaceuticals. He informed that the main distributor for those medicines was stationed at Vijayawada, and that all distributors were arriving at Vijayawada the same night at 10 pm. We could get information about availability of stock of the medicines from them in their respective areas. We reached Vijayawada that night and learnt that stocks of the required medicines were available with a wholesale dealer in Tenali. The next day we reached Tenali, and bought the medicines. During those days, there were no trains to Nellore till evening. It was already twenty - four hours from the time we received the phone call for medicines. I was getting frustrated that I was not able to buy the medicines for Amma. I prayed her to render these medicines useful for her. We reached Nellore by mid-night. By that time, another set of those medicines arrived from Madras, and the doctor has started administering them on Amma. Days passed, but there was no improvement in the health of Amma. The doctor said that that was the most appropriate medicine for Amma's health problem.

Extremely worried, the doctor paid obeisance to Amma and asked her to tell him which medicine to be used. Amma asked him to use the medicines brought by Appa Rao. The doctor was surprised! He said, 'Amma, The medicine is the same; just because the medicines from Madras arrived earlier, I have started using them. Otherwise, the medicines are the same.' Amma said, 'While buying the medicines, I prayed that the medicines he was buying should be useful for Amma.' The medicines brought by me were used; Amma recovered.

An Outing to Kolleru

Kolleru Lake is spread across one lakh acres. Banking Krishna and West Godavari districts, Kolleru Lake provides livelihood to thousands of households. The Lake hosts about 40 islands. Agriculture is practised here, in reasonably significant measure. There are no fish tanks. The lake appears like a vast ocean, with expanse of water in any direction of sight.

On November 16, 1973, at 4 pm, Amma set off for the magnificent Kolleru along with her entourage in two boats. Local people from Kolleru came to see Amma, worshipped her, and took her blessings. Amma distributed the *pulihora* and fruits which she brought among everyone. The entire trip was blissful, beyond description. As it was getting dark, we all started our journey back to Jillellamudi.

It was an unforgettable trip with Amma who tries to reach out to everyone irrespective of social, economic or political status.

Dress, Address

During one of my visits to Jillellamudi, I had a unique experience. Once, I went to '*Vatsalyalayam*' to have darshan of Amma. The doors of her room were closed. I was waiting for the doors to open to see Amma. In the meanwhile, brother Ramakrishna accompanied a lady, a State Minister, to take her to Amma directly for darshan in her room. After some time, the lady went away, and only then I had a chance to go and see Amma. I was hugely disappointed and upset. I had full faith in Amma; I was waiting to meet her expectantly, and now I find that a Minister was given preference over me. How about Amma's proclamation that one should not look at dress or address, implying that one should not differentiate from person to person? I could not bring myself to accept this conduct of Amma.

I expressed my dichotomy with Amma. Amma replied, 'My dear son, do you know what she wanted? She just wanted to have a morsel of food to be fed from my hand. Can you recollect how many morsels you have eaten off my hand?'

Not only was I immensely satisfied with this reply, but also realised that with the lady having finished with Amma quickly, I have all the time with Amma now. And I always want a lot of time with Amma, and will not be satisfied with brief darshan! Amma knows how to satisfy her different children.

Once Smt. Seshamma, younger sister of Amma's mother, prepared *puris* for Amma with devotion, and came to feed her. Amma remarked, *'Instead of feeding me, why don't you feed the poor children who pick left-overs from disposed food leaves? I will feel satisfied if they are satisfied.'* Immediately, the *puris* were fed to those children. Amma enjoyed noticing the bliss on the faces of children being fed affectionately. Amma announced, 'Dress or address is not the qualification for access

to food, hunger alone is.' Amma displayed the unique side of her personality through her action of feeding others, and through that metamorphosing us mind and thought.

If The One Who Is Being Fed Feels So Happy, Then How Happy Does The One Who Feeds Feel?

I had the good fortune of having been fed by Amma several times. For a long time, I did not have this opportunity. I was longing for that. I went to Jillellamudi with the strong desire that Amma should feed me. That day I did not have food. Amma was not doing well that day. She was not in a position to get up and feed me. Yet I asked her, 'Amma, please feed me through your hands.' Without bothering about her health, Amma called up sister Vasundhara, asked her to get curry and rice, mixed them up adding ghee and started feeding me in my hand. Usually, she used to feed me in my mouth. As I was eating, I felt that I had given Amma extreme trouble being insensitive about her health condition. Tears rolled down my cheeks. Amma was feeding me, and I was eating. I was intently gazing Amma. Amma appeared excited to feed me. I exclaimed, 'Amma, I feel bliss when I eat off your hand.' Amma said, 'if the one who is being fed feels so happy, how happy would the one who feeds will feel?'

That message was in fact a sermon for me.

If Even We Abandon Her, Amma Will Not Leave Us

That was the year 1973. I was running my Maruti Rice Mill in Eluru. I always desired to spend more time in the presence of Amma. However, I could not do so due to my avocation with the Rice Mill. I used to go in the morning and come back by evening the same day to take care of the Mill.

Once, I went to Jillellamudi with a desire to spend a leisurely evening with Amma. The next day, when I wanted to take leave of Amma, she remarked, 'Go tomorrow, my son.' I stayed back. Again when I wanted to take leave of her the next day, she again asked me to stay back. But due to pressing work load, I told her that I had to go. After she applied vermilion on my forehead, I was awaiting the van to take me to Bapatla. In the meanwhile, there was a message from Amma that she would be leaving for Surya Lanka coast in an hour. I went back to the upstairs of the building.

It started raining heavily. I felt that my travel back to Eluru was not possible that day. But, after the rain subsided, about 100 persons got into various vehicles and started moving. We also carried *pulihora*[12] *prasadam*. By twilight, we reached the sea shore.

Amma started moving into the sea on the beach. Many persons accompanied Amma. Brother Ekkirala Bharadwaja and I covered Amma from both sides. As we walked into the sea, the water level was knee deep. Brother and I both joined our hands and asked Amma sit on the link. Amma was quite light like a log. The water now came up to our hip level. We felt bliss at the sight of the sea from that angle.

[12] A rice preparation with tamarind, popular in south India.

It appeared to me that the Sea God was inviting Amma by stretching his hands in the form of waves; the waves seemed to depict the contented heart of the Sea God. At this juncture, it occurred to me that my wrist watch was getting wet. No sooner than this thought occurred to me that Amma left my hand. Someone else took my place.

I was ashamed at my foolishness. When I was with the Mother of All and when she was holding my hand, my thoughts were concentrated on my mundane wrist watch? I should have worried more about my life being blessed by Amma rather than on disposable things! I could not control my emotions. The feeling of remorse was flowing in the form of incessant tears from my eyes. As I sat on the sea shore reflecting upon my stupidity, Amma appeared and sat by my side. Her compassionate looks triggered another bout of emotion in me. I recalled her as someone who would be satisfied with mere thought as she is extolled in her prayers by devotees. I ate the *pulihora* fed by Amma belly full. The truth that Amma does not abandon her children even if children abandon her dawned on me.

Although I wanted to go back to Eluru, Amma withheld me only to shower upon me her love while at the same time driving a message home about the ephemeral nature of worldly things.

Next day as Amma was bidding me leave, I set off for Eluru while praying with her not to distance me from her and her love.

Arkapuram is Brindavan!

That was May 6, 1984. The previous day May 5 was Amma's Marriage Day and therefore there was a feast for all. As the feast was going on, Amma remarked, 'My children, is it fair that you people enjoy the feast while the cattle do not have any?' As soon as Amma spoke these words, cattlefeed was procured from 'Jagarlamudi'.

In the meanwhile, a message was sent to all cattle-bearing families about Amma's desire to hold a feast for the animals. People bathed up their cattle, decorated them, applied vermilion, garlanded and herded them to an open place west of Amma's residence. They were all tied up in a circular form.

All the ashramites set off from Amma's residence in a rally while a fully adorned Amma sat in the car. The ashramites led by Kasu Radhakrishna Reddy began their rally with enthusiastic chants of '*Jayahomata*' as Amma's car followed them surrounded by devotees all around.

As the rally arrived at the cattle place, the cattle started mooing 'Amba, Amba' while beholding Amma. Amma asked to arrange for *shehnai* remarking that cattle enjoy the music more than human beings. Isn't it said that *'Shishurvetti, pashurvetti?'* remarked Amma.

Amma sat on a chair amidst the cattle in the centre of the circle. All the brothers and sisters got into dancing around Amma to express their bliss, as Amma was chatting away with them. The scene reminded me of Sri Krishna eating away rice soaked from previous night.

Some of the brothers and sisters danced on the cattle feed that was laid in heaps to make it fine and easily eatable by the cattle. As Amma fed the cattle, the place reverberated with cries of 'Amba' by the cattle.

In Brindavan, even today, the cattle are decorated beautifully. Some of the ashram heads I know prostrate before the cattle the first thing after they rise every day in the morning. In some cattlesheds, some ashrams have arranged fans to ensure better climate for the cattle. The scene here in Jillellamudi reminded me of the scenes that I saw in Brindavan.

Even Brahma was surprised at the cattle herders in the company of Sri Krishna who were happily rearing their cattle without any worries of any kind during those yesteryears. This fortune of herders is not easily achievable even to *rishis* who carry out penance for decades. It is our good fortune that we have enjoyed the presence of Amma, the Mother of all humanity! I wondered: Is this Arkapuram or Brindavan?

Matrusri Adhyayana Parishad

My relation and affection with Amma dates back to 1973. Not without a reason.

Those days, a devotee named Chandran used to come to Jillellamudi from Gudiyatham in Tamil Nadu. He was very close to Amma. He had direct access to her.

Looking at the great fortune of Chandran, I used to wonder whether I would ever get so close to Amma and blessed with her affection. Could I converse with Amma on any topic unhesitatingly? Can I ever become eligible for her compassion? Perhaps it was due to this longing that Amma launched the Adhyayana Parishad.

That was January 13, 1973. It was the 'bhogi[13]' festival day. Three of us friends from Eluru went to Jillellamudi and arrived into the benevolent presence of Amma. That day Amma launched the 'Matrusri Adhyayana Parishad' of Eluru. She appointed the three of us as office bearers: Sri Gutta Subbarao as President, Gudivaka Namasshivaya as Vice President and me as Secretary. She blessed us by applying *tilak* on our foreheads. We were highly jubilant at this development.

'Work with people - be a part of people' was an exhortation of Amma. Taking this as Amma's message, we began

[13] Pongal marks the beginning of the northward journey of the Sun from its southernmost-limit, a movement traditionally referred to as *uttarayana*. It coincides with the festival Makara Sankranthi celebrated throughout India as the winter harvest, and is usually held from January 13–16. The day preceding Pongal is called **Bhogi** when people discard old things and focus on new belongings. The disposal of derelict things is similar to Holika in North India. The people assemble at dawn in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh to light a bonfire to discard old used possessions. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thai_Pongal#Bhogi

preparations for the Golden Jubilee birthday celebrations of Amma. We pooled up money for procuring two trucks of foodgrains from West Godavari and sent it to Jillellamudi. We could participate more meaningfully in Amma's birthday celebrations. This has helped not only to strengthen my bonding with Amma but also provided an opportunity to serve Amma in many ways.

I was also appointed Vice Principal of Matrusri Oriental College twice during 1973-75 and 1982-84. I also served in many ways as part of the Eluru Adhyayana Parishad. All these gave me opportunity to work closely with Amma.

Even after Amma left her physical abode, I had the good fortune of continuing to serve the institutions set up by Amma; while Gutta Subbarao served as President of the Matrusri Oriental College, Boppudi Ramabrahmam and Vallabhaneni Krishnaji as Vice Presidents, Kondamudi Ramakrishna as Secretary, I served as the Joint Secretary. We all were the office bearers till May 4, 1989 during which we managed to construct a new building for the college. I was happy that not only did I partake of Amma's affection, but also could contribute to institutions set up by Amma. What more could one aspire for in life?

Amma's
Golden Birth Anniversary Celebrations

On the occasion of completion of fifty years of Amma's divine presence on this earth, her birthday celebrations were organised on April 12, 1973. The celebrations were organised to fulfil Amma's desire of witnessing a lakh persons partaking food - all at once, together.

Come to think of it, is it an easy task to cater to a lakh persons at the same time? Is it possible at all? Is it within the realm of human beings? How many organisers, workers and cooks are required for this event? How many dishes, of various sizes, are required? How many shelters have to be put up? These were just some of the questions that were haunting the devotees when Amma expressed her desire. Nonetheless, Viswajananee Parishad members jumped into converting Amma's desire into action. On her birthday, having come to know of Amma's desires, scores of devotees started arriving at Jillellamudi. Shelters were put up in a 60-acre patch of land. Efforts to pool up foodgrains and other materials began. A total of 13 kitchens were set up to cater to 8000 devotees per kitchen. For Eluru Association, two kitchens were allocated: one for me, and another for Sri Gudivaka Namashivaya.

At around 11 am, looking at the thin gathering, much shorter than the one lakh population desired by Amma, brother KBG Gopalakrishna got worried and rushed to Amma saying that a lot of food that is being cooked will get wasted. Amma replied that people would arrive in time. By 11.30 am, the number of devotees shot up to a lakh!! People arrived in all types of transport - cars, buses, scooters, motor cycles, tractors, cycles, bullock carts…. . Looking at the influx of arriving human bodies, brother Gopalakrishna was now

worried whether the food being cooked would be sufficient. He approached Amma and expressed his concern, saying, 'Amma, there are too many people arriving. Shall I organise for one more truck of rice from Bapatla?' Amma smiled and said, 'If you start getting foodgrains now, when are you going to cook and feed the people? Don't worry. I will take bath and come to the kitchens. No need to go to Bapatla.'

Now let's look at the scene in the kitchen allotted to me. By 2.30 in the noon, the food cooked got exhausted on serving 2000 persons. I was a worried person. Still 6000 persons were to be fed in my kitchen! I just did not know what to do. I raised my both hands and prayed Amma.

Just before beginning serving, Amma arrived in a jeep fully decked up. The jeep travelled in slow motion on the broad road laid out in between the kitchen tents. It stopped in front of the food mounds of each kitchen, and Amma gazed intently on each of these heaps of cooked food. We have given '*harathi*[14]' to Amma and the food heaps. I recalled one of Amma's quotes: 'What you distribute is *prasadam*'. We continued with our serving. All the 8000 persons finished their lunch. Still the foodheaps were intact. Another batch of 4000 persons sat down for partaking the lunch. The food heaps continued to be intact. We went on serving till 9 pm. The scene was more or less the same not only in the kitchen allotted to us, but also in all the other kitchens. I am the living witness to this miracle of food supply rendered unending due to Amma's divine blessings. Even the next day, on the April 13, numerous persons shared the food. The heat did not reduce in the food items. The items did not smell of decay. In toto, more than a lakh of persons took lunch as desired by Amma. As per Amma's instructions, all the leftover food items were broadcast into the farmlands and into the river for sharing with insects, mice, reptiles etc. - whom Amma's calls them as her children too!

[14] Harathi (spelt as *Aarthi* in north India) is Divine fire created usually out of camphor and offered to God as part of traditional worship among Hindus in India.

Amma's Visit to Eluru

Amma and her entourage reached the outskirts of Eluru at midnight, around 2 o'clock of November 3, 1973. Amma's devotees Gutta Subbarao, President of Matrusri Research Centre, Vice President Gudivaka Namashivaya, V. Krishnaji Rao, All India Radio Artist Jayalakshmi and Group, and me as Secretary of the Centre were already anxiously waiting for her arrival.

After traveling in a jeep that piloted the car conducting Amma, we all extended our heartfelt welcome to her in the form of a mellifluous song, and exhorted her to the lane where the Rice Mill was located.

The entire street was decorated beautifully. The street was sprinkled with water in the traditional manner and covered with rangoli in a variety of colors. Mango leaves and plantain leaves adorned either sides of the street. Full of street lights, the street came alive. It was 3 pm; yet there were at least ten thousand devotees awaiting Amma eagerly as they chanted away Amma's name.

At last, Amma arrived amidst chants of devotees that reverberated the atmosphere.

As Amma's entourage approached the house of Pachipulusu Rangaiah where her stay was organised, priests welcomed Amma to the accompaniment of vedic chants. Amma gave darshan to all those who were present and then retired to her abode. The next day, on January 4, 1973, more than 30,000 persons including celebrities and VIPs arrived and had Amma's darshan that went on from morning to afternoon.

Later Amma interacted with the journalists who arrived at around 2 pm. Amma responded to their numerous probing questions laced with subtle messages.

One journalist asked Amma, 'What is the purpose of your current tour of Eluru?' Amma responded as a matter of fact by saying, 'I felt like seeing my children and so I am here'.

Q: 'Are you Mother only for Indians?'

A: *'No, I am Mother for Everyone and Everything, ...for animals, and birds too.'*

Q: 'What is the easiest way to obtaining salvation?'

A: *'Family.'*

Q: 'Is it not necessary to have the guidance of a guru?'

A: *'Life itself is a guru.'*

Q: 'Some say that there is God, while others say that there is no God. Who is creating all these thoughts?'

A: *'All these thoughts are His creation alone!'*

Q: 'What is God?'

A: *'Determination (Sankalpam) is God.'*

Q: 'What is the reason that thousands seek your darshan?'

A: *'Where is the need for a reason for children to come and see their Mother?'*

Obviously, satisfied with the interaction, the journalists offered their pranams and left the venue. Accompanied by thousands of devotees, Amma subsequently reached CRR College at around 4.45 pm. More than a lakh of persons were awaiting Amma's arrival. Upon seeing Amma, the glint of happiness in their faces and glee in their eyes was unmistakable.

The Day Amma Blessed My House

It is an unforgettable day in my life - the day Amma set her divine step in my house in Eluru. That was November 4, 1973, 8 pm. Those days, befitting my modest financial status, I was staying in a small rented house which had very small rooms and a little open space. On the other side of the rooms, beyond the little open space, was the toilet, which did not have a door. Conscious of this condition of my house, I chose not to invite Amma to my house. All the same, I was in a depressed condition due to the fact that my physical status deprived me of the opportunity of Amma's visit to my house. I thought if I had a big house, I could have had the fortune of inviting Amma to my house. The rooms were so small that I could not even place a cot for Amma in them. Alternatively, I could not even lay the cot in the open space as the toilet is just on the opposite side. Tears involuntarily rolled down my cheeks.

Does Amma not know my pain? Why did she put me in this condition? I was lost in such thoughts but somehow felt was sure she would know. As I was engrossed in these thoughts, Amma looked at me and said, *'Son, I am coming to your house.'*

I could not believe my ears! My happiness knew no bounds!! But the reality touched me, and I told her, 'Amma, I stay in a small, rented house.' She said, 'Wherever you stay, that itself is your house.'

Almost immediately, I left for my house to make preparations for her arrival. I got the house cleaned, placed a cot in the backyard and laid out a new bed sheet on the cot. A gunny bag was hung to the toilet entrance to serve as a blind.

Amma arrived at 11 pm. Devotees crowded the street leading to my house raising chants that reverberated the air. Amma entered my house, and stretched herself on the cot, watching the pure scenic beauty of the sky. The pleasant, soothing moon radiated soft light in all directions creating a

pleasing ambience. It appeared that Amma was enjoying the coolness of the moonlight. There was peace all around. Amma turned towards me and said, 'It's so nice, son.' Looking at Amma's happiness, I was happy that my house was small, that compelled me to lay the cot in the open, and which resulted in Amma enjoying the moonlight and getting good rest. The next day, we offered a silk sari to Amma which she wore. We felt extremely happy.

I realised subsequently that within a short duration of Amma's visit, our financial position improved; we constructed a bungalow with the blessings of Amma.

Amma's Visit to the Scavengers Colony

It was announced to the inmates of the Scavengers Colony that Amma was visiting their colony shortly. They were exhilarated. All the inmates gathered together and cleaned up their houses and the streets. They prepared *pulihora* (tamarind rice) etc. as offering to Amma.

As soon as Amma arrived in their colony, they advanced towards her and welcomed her with garlands. Every inmate - child, woman and man came out of their houses. They were all very happy that Amma bestowed her kindness on them. Amma hugged them. It was a sight to look at. The peace and tranquillity that permeated the air indicated that the relationship between Amma and the inmates was perhaps many births old. Amma moved forward observing each one of the streets, and each house on the streets.

Subsequently, Amma proceeded to the weavers' colony. There too people came forward and fell at the feet of Amma. Amma lifted them up caringly and hugged them with compassion and love. Amma demonstrated what she used to say: *'Not just to temples, but we shall go to poor houses too.'* Put differently, for Amma, temples and the houses of the poor mean the same.

The Embodiment of Love

The venue was a big spacious hall. The street leading up to the hall of the Government Juvenile Home in Sanivarpeta, was lined up with tall coconut trees. There were 350 children between the ages 10 and 14 who have committed some crime or the other during their impressionable ages. The Home aimed at not only bringing about a change in the behaviour of the children but also equip them with skills so that they could earn their own livelihood eventually.

Amma visited the Juvenile Home at the invitation of Dr. Amaleswara Rao. Awaiting her arrival anxiously, as Amma entered the home, all the children desired to fall into her lap, perhaps due to having been denied of their own parents' proximity for long. However, the protocol of the home did not allow that. Amma sensed their inner thoughts and asked them, 'Do you want to see your parents?' So saying Amma took them into her ambit, and hugged them. She turned towards Dr. Amaleswara Rao and advised him to take care of the children as their own father and mother do, and ensure that they do not feel their absence. As Amma uttered these words, tears rolled down her cheeks. The Mother's heart felt the pain and responded with compassion. While mature elders themselves were moved at the sight, could children hold their tears back? Amma wiped the tears of a couple of children, and bid them good bye. My eyes well up even today as I recall the incident.

Brother Ramakrishna and Me

I met brother Ramakrishna for the first time in 1971 when I went to Jillellamudi to have darshan of Amma. By the year 1973, our acquaintance grew into a strong bond. Brother Ramakrishna often used to talk about Amma and her philosophy, with the result that I was elevated to be able to understand Amma's compassionate approach towards one and all.

One day, Amma and brother Ramakrishna were discussing the matter of construction of Gayatri Bhawan. Amma's advice to brother Ramakrishna was to lay the foundation to suit a two-storey structure while he was in favour of a foundation for a thatched house, mainly in view of the limited fund availability. In the meanwhile, on receiving a message about the arrival of engineers, brother left to meet them. I remarked with Amma: 'Amma, I thought brother was a matured person. Rather than follow your instructions, he argues and voices his opinions with you!' Amma replied cryptically: 'What is the problem with his maturity? Although he has immense faith in me, when it comes to practice, he has to express what he *feels* is right.' I felt ashamed at my immaturity.

From this conversation, I realised the meaning of equanimity and the characteristics of a stoic. It is the devotion to the work, and not devotion to oneself or one's knowledge that is important. Brother Ramakrishna gradually surrendered completely to Amma, which is reflected in his song in this form:

'Let my life continue in your service

Let my breath stop in your thought'……

This has become a message for me for life.

Naxalites Are Also My Children

On December 30, 1975, two devotees by name Pokuri Annapurnamma and Dammala Sitarathnam arrived at Jillellamudi for darshan of Amma. The same night, another devotee Valluri Jagannadha Rao and his family carried out *Amma vratam* (a puja - worship with Amma as the main deity). For reasons unknown, Amma hastened the puja and asked *harathi* to be given to all. Giving harathi signals end of the puja. She also indicated *Nannagaru* to sleep in a place other than where he is used to. Earlier, Brother Ramakrishna went to a place called Appikatla.

It was midnight. Suddenly, amidst sounds of bomb blasts, we heard shouts of 'Ammas and babas should be destroyed.' All the inmates were shocked and frightened. Sisters who came from Eluru ran and took shelter in the room nearby office fearing for life. The door of that room did not have bolts, nor did it have windows. The sisters had a lot of gold jewellery on their person. Fearing for life and theft, they held themselves on to the door from inside, seated down with all their weight. In the meanwhile, the naxalites reached the window, and flashed their lights into the room in a bid to locate people. Unable to spot any one, they moved on to the room where Amma was present, and started banging on the door. People holding on to Amma led her from one room to the other over a couple of rooms bolting each door after them. Determined even to lay down his life, brother Gopal stood in one of the previous rooms in a bid to cover Amma hidden in the last room. The intruders broke open the door, entered the room, and finding brother Gopal dragged him out of the rooms into the open and demanded to know where Amma was. Brother defiantly said that he does not know. Getting wild at this reply, their leader retorted: 'Hit him with the rod a hundred times'. At once, his

ten associates who surrounded brother Gopal, lifted their weapons. On hearing these shouts, Amma made desperate attempts to go into this room. But sisters around her including Seshakkayya were withholding her, pleading not to go.

In the meanwhile, one of the intruders threw a weapon towards brother Gopal who lifted his hand to stop it. The weapon crashed against Amma's ringer which he was wearing and went past him. The intruders noticed the gold ring; putting down their weapons, they asked him to part with his golden ring. As this was going on, some others broke open the almirah and robbed its contents. A few others went to Hymalayam and lifted all the gold jewellery from the idol. At this juncture, there was this announcement from the leader that it was time to leave. All of them left.

As the naxalites left, brother Gopal came running and told Amma: 'Amma, they have robbed everything from the almirah.' Amma replied: 'Doesn't matter the jewellery, my son is safe.' She continued: 'Some children ask and take; some others threaten and take. They belong to the latter category. In any case, they are also my children, my son.'

Rites In The Presence Of Amma

I became close to Amma from the year 1973. Any important event in my house has to take place only in the presence of Amma. Whether it is a materialistic function or a religious function, I always took her permission. Amma too was always supportive and used to give me appropriate advice. Even if I had to go on a pilgrimage or travel to any place, I had to take Amma's permission. With this liberty, I expressed my desire to conduct my father's annual rites on March 29, 1975 in her presence to which Amma agreed.

There was a strong background to my asking Amma like this. Once Amma and I were seated in *Vatsalyalayam*; a brother was conducting his father's rites. He first washed Amma's feet, and worshipped her. Then, he poured a little warm water into her palm. In the meanwhile, a sister placed a small table in front of Amma. On it was placed a big plate containing three vegetable curries, three types of pickles, dal, sambar, vada, *payasam* and ghee. A bowl of curd was also placed on the table.

Amma mixed up all the items in the same plate finally topping up with ghee poured out of the bowl. Then, she made big balls of the mixed food, and cast a glance. She partook a few grains, and belched. Subsequently, she gave one ball of the mixed food to the brother conducting the rites, and distributed the rest among everyone present there, including me. The brother was extremely delighted, and remarked ecstatically: 'When Amma herself is a *bhokta*[15], there is no re-birth for my late father.' Amma normally does not take rice or any other solid food, except on occasions such as these. At this juncture, I too felt like carrying out rites of my father in her presence, and

[15] An Occupier/Experiencer who receives honour on behalf of the deceased after whom the rites are being conducted.

expressed so with Amma. She agreed immediately. As the appointed date approached on March 23, 1975, suddenly, Amma's south India tour was finalised. Upon coming to know of this, I felt deeply disappointed at missing her for my father's annual rites. Unable to bear the pressure, I expressed my worry in the presence of Amma.

'Why do you feel sad, my son? Come to Madras, we will conduct the rites there itself.' I felt elated! The son of Engineer grandfather (that is how he was addressed) Chundur Achyutaramaiah organised accommodation for Amma and her family in his house in Alwarpet, Madras.

I reached their house in Madras in the morning of March 29. Amma's family along with Vasundhara akkayya, nannagaru, Subbarao, Ravi, Seshu, Vaidehi, brother Ramakrishna, host Achyutaramaiah's family and all of us sat down in the presence of Amma. A small table was brought and kept in front of Amma. A big plate was brought and all the cooked food items were placed in the plate. Since Amma is the bhokta, she asked me to place some water in her hand; I did so and she drank it. Then, she mixed up all the items nicely and took a little. The rest of the food she distributed among all of us. My joy knew no bounds as the fact that Amma and all her family members were my guests for my father's anniversary and that my desire had been fulfilled. I knew that my late forefathers were very lucky to have had Amma herself as *bhokta*.

As the reality of having celebrated my father's rites in the presence of Amma sunk in, a further desire emerged in me; that Amma should also be bhokta for my mother's anniversary. Once I had a discussion with Amma on these annual rites. I asked her: 'Amma, in our country, we have anniversary for our deceased persons; but, there are no such functions in the other countries. Then, what happens to their late forefathers?' Amma replied: 'Why, they too have these ceremonies. They remember their deceased persons on the date of their death, and feed

others to the best of each one's capacity.' This was both a revelation and a message for me. From then on, whenever there is an opportunity, I feed people to the best of ability and convenience.

Amma was not present in Jillellamudi on my mother's anniversary day. Of course, I too was on tour along with Amma. I felt that since we are on tour, it might be easier to offer *laddus* to Amma, who agreed to be the bhokta.

I bought two kilogrammes of *laddus* and was going towards Amma's room. Grandmother met me on the way and inquired about what I was carrying. I told her that these were *laddus* and that I was going to offer to Amma as she is the bhokta for my mother's anniversary that day. Grandmother remarked: 'In the first place, Amma suffers from diabetes. You are offering so many *laddus* to her? You think she won't eat these *laddus*? She sucks away all the nectar and leaves us the pulp. Don't you know?' Although I was shocked, I was equally surprised at this insightful message from grandmother. I recollected that every day in the Annapurnalayam, Amma is offered all cooked food items in a plate. Amma lifts the leaf cover and casts a glance on all items. Then, without eating any item, she used to comment about excess or low salt or spice in each item. That means, by just a glance, Amma receives all the items offered to her! I was extremely overwhelmed with the embedded emotion of grandmother towards Amma; till then, I was under the impression that the presentation of food items to Amma was ritualistic. Now I know, the emotional content has supremacy.

The Companionship

Till the year 1976, I was engaged in running a rice mill. I could not any more put up with the vicissitudes of the huge business. Thinking that I should embark on a smaller business, I started wholesale trading in groundnut oil.

Since this was a new business for me, I desired that it should be launched by the benign hands of Amma. I took the trade related books to Amma and sought her blessings. Amma remarked, 'Even if you start your business with my blessings, how can you escape the profit and loss in the business? In any business, both are always present.' But I persisted, with a strong belief that Amma will take care of those who ardently believe in her. Amma yielded to my persistence, and wrote down, 'Am, Aaa' on the books. Then I asked, 'Amma, give me some money also through your benign hands'. Amma gave Rs.116/-. My groundnut oil business started.

With the blessings of Amma, the oil business was progressing beyond expectations. I could feel the presence of Amma with me always as a companion. Although Amma says that ups and downs in life are all her blessings, she comes to our rescue whenever we are in difficulties. This is a common experience for many of her devotees. I will explain one incident from my experience.

Reform

[Excerpted from 'Matrusri' Monthly Magazine, 1978]

On the morning of January 2, 1978, brother Tunuguntla Triloka Appa Rao arrived at Jillellamudi to have darshan of Amma along with another person. He introduced the new devotee. His name was Bipin Kumar Behera, a resident of Cuttack. Behera was a well-known smuggler, an expert conman. He appeared crude, with red tinges in eyes; he reflected cruel countenance.

As soon as he was introduced to Amma, Behera confided all his bad qualities in her. His eyes were moist, and it appeared that his stony heart started to melt. There was shivering in his voice.

'Do you also tell lies, my son?' inquired Amma compassionately. 'That is the only bad thing I do not have Amma; whatever mistakes and crimes I commit I admit honestly,' he said in a humble tone.

'That alone is sufficient, son. You have a praiseworthy quality that is not found in many. That one good quality of yours is sufficient to overwhelm all your other bad qualities.'

'Amma, please reform me,' pleaded Behera.

'You are all right, now, my son. Not only now, you have always been good.' So saying Amma picked up an orange from a plate in front of her, peeled it and fed him piece by piece. She summoned him to sit by her side, and patted his back gently and affectionately. What all was there in Amma's touch - compassion, love, affection….I do not know. Behera was shocked, surprised, and ecstatic!

The experience was unique for him, unprecedented. The world he knew, the people he knew were all totally different. That's why probably, the pious place, Amma's compassion, motherly love and affection have all bestowed him with a unique experience.

With a shivering hand, Behera took a piece from Amma's hand; he requested her to allow him to feed the fruit. Amma did not refuse. She savoured the fruit while her eyes showered rays of compassion. People witnessing the event felt very happy; they probably felt envious of Behera's good fortune to have Amma's love.

It is interesting to know how he reached the divine presence of Amma in Jillellamudi. Let me narrate it.

Tunuguntla Triloka Appa Rao is a resident of Eluru. He is one of the many devotees who visit Jillellamudi regularly. He is an ardent follower of Amma, and has utmost faith and devotion. He attempts to see Amma in every person and in everything. Amma lives in his thoughts, always. He alludes every happening in his life to Amma's blessings and her benevolence. True, he is one who has received Amma's benevolence in abundant measure.

Those days, he was trading in groundnut oil. On June 20, 1977, he organised four barrels of groundnut oil purchased at a cost of Rs.70,000 to be transported to Eluru by a truck. The truck had the registration number ABT 2197. The owner and driver of that truck was none other than Bipin Kumar Behera. Apt to his characteristic, Behera's mind thought of stealing the oil and making money out of it. En route he reached Vijayawada and hid away the barrels of groundnut oil in a secret place. He bought some coconuts and prayed to Tirupati Sri Venkateswaraswamy to help him reach the destination safely. As if his prayers were answered, he proceeded to reach his destination safely, sold away the oil and made money.

In the meanwhile, Appa Rao started getting worried as the truck did not arrive at Eluru on the scheduled day. He began suspecting something was amiss; so reached Emmiganur and filed a police complaint.

On the way back to Eluru, he called up Amma on phone from Hotel Natraj in Vijayawada and informed her about his missing oil and the truck. Although he was a partner in the business, Appa Rao alone has invested all the money he had into it. Previous years, he made losses in his rice mill business. His shop was robbed and he lost Rs.20,000/- . On top of all these, now his groundnut oil is stolen. He was deeply depressed and upset.

On the other end of the phone, Amma heard what all Appa Rao had to say, and remarked, 'Son, the person who took away your goods probably needs money very badly which made him steal your goods. However, he would be certainly repenting and has a feeling worse than you.'

'What do you want me to do now, Amma?'

'What can you do? Something will happen on its own. *Whatever is destined will happen. Just stay watching.'*

Appa Rao felt very bad at Amma's response. He also felt angry at her because he has placed utmost faith in her all these years, and she is responding in this way when he is in dire straits. If we have to only wait and watch at things unfolding, then what are these gods and goddesses for? Why this worship? What is most unbecoming of Amma is that when he shared his pain and the loss of goods, instead of understanding and sympathising with him, she is sympathising with the fellow who committed the crime!? Not just that but also justifying his need for theft!! Although Appa Rao was at a loss, how could he counter Amma?

Enveloped with thoughts, he pleaded with her, 'Amma, at least give me strength to bear with all this!'

'What is there for me to give you? You have the necessary strength'.

On hearing this, Appa Rao reveals that his mind which was so upset and deeply disturbed till then, suddenly calmed down and he was at peace.

He said to Amma, 'Anyway I will manage myself. At least call up my wife in Eluru and give her solace.'

Amma called up my wife, and told her, 'Do not fear, I am here. I will take care of everything.' It seems that after these words were spoken by Amma to her, Appa Rao's wife also calmed down. Appa Rao believes that Amma's divine intervention started from this point onwards. Why because, according to Behera, he has committed many thefts - big and small - in the past. He never felt so disturbed. But after this theft, there were many unexplained thought processes that began in his mind. He felt that some inexplicable, invisible force was chasing him making him restless.

So much so that he came to Vijayawada on July 12, 1977, met with Appa Rao, confessed the theft, and promised that he will give away his truck to him to compensate for the stolen goods. He requested Appa Rao to treat him as his younger brother, and withdraw the police case. He added that he was recently married, but could not spend much time with his wife as he was addicted to these bad habits. It suddenly occurred to him that he should distance himself from not only his wife, but also his family if he continued with his current lifestyle. When this occurred to him, he realised the value of what he was, and would be, losing if he fails.

As he heard Behera, Appa Rao started analysing if he would hand over his own brother to police if he had committed such a theft, and pleads for forgiveness. Absolutely not! At that instant, Appa Rao recalled Amma's words to him when he shared the theft incident with her on phone. He realised that

Amma has in fact shown a lot of concern on him which he could not gauge at that time.

As was his wont, Appa Rao tried to connect Amma's sayings with the incident. For Amma, the rich, the poor, the thief, the beggar are all her children. She finds no difference between them. All are equal to her. Then, why he should try to square up with Behera? Amma spoke many times, 'No one is responsible for anything he or she does. There is a spirit that inspires them to do what they do. Therefore, there is no need to praise one who has done a so-called good work, or degrade the other who has committed a mistake.' Appa Rao reasoned, if one is an actor in the larger scheme of things of God, then why nurture or react at one's actions? How can he, who always makes efforts to internalise Amma's preachings, forget the same when it comes to himself?

If all are children of Amma, then they are his brothers and sisters, surely. In fact, is not the whole purpose of Amma's incarnation inspiring universal brotherhood among us? Then, why is he not able to comprehend the real message of Amma? What is the use of listening to preachings and not able to follow them?

As Appa Rao emerged from these strings of thoughts, he felt a deep compassion for Behera. He made up his mind to help Behera and promised him so.

In the meanwhile, Behera's brothers tried to dissuade him from handing over the truck to Appa Rao. However, Behera did no heed their advice.

On July 21, 1977 Behera handed over his truck to the Magistrate of Adoni. Since a case was already registered against Behera under IPC section 407, he was imprisoned in Emmiganur jail.

Here in the jail, he had a unique experience and learning. He was overhearing the conversation between two jail

inmates; they were trying to know why the other was put in jail. One said that he was caught trying to steal half a bag of foodgrains to feed his starving family. The other person also committed a small crime under similar unavoidable circumstances.

Listening to this conversation, Behera felt a deep sense of remorse. He thought that the other two persons committed crime responding to a dire need; on the contrary, he has committed a crime for the greed of leading a luxurious lifestyle. He deceived a pious person and therefore deserves to be punished. While this thought brought him some solace, the immediate next thought about his wife brought him agony. He thought, while he is landed in the jail, what about the suffering of his wife, who has not done any wrong?

Unable to bear the impact of these thoughts and feelings, he pleaded with brother Appa Rao for release. Being a sensitive and emotional person, Appa Rao provided personal guarantee to police against which Behera was released on temporary bail.

The hearing was scheduled for last week of December in Adoni. Both Behera and Appa Rao reached the Adoni court. On seeing Behera at the court, Appa Rao felt an upwelling of brotherly compassion and affection for Behera in every chord of his body. He was compelled by some force to think in terms of transforming Behera into a good human being. He wanted to purge him of all his bad qualities, and put him on the path of righteousness. Determined with this goal, Appa Rao subsequently took Behera along with him to sacred places like Mahanandi and Mantralayam. During the travel, he shared many stories and life events of pious men, sages and saints. He spoke about Amma and her philosophy of compassion and love. He elaborated on how Amma - an embodiment of forgiveness and compassion, is magnanimous towards criminals too. Everywhere you will find people respecting, loving and caring persons of good character and habits; but

Amma, an incarnation, considers even criminals as her own children. She never discriminates, a natural characteristic of her. He considers Amma his guide, philosopher and God; she is everything for him. Amma is the prop and basis of his life. She is the basis for all life forms; he believes that she is the Almighty who creates, sustains and destroys nature.

Behera heard all these attentively. He digested every word of what Appa Rao was saying. He felt that he was experiencing a new life; all these people were appearing to him as gods, not as ordinary human beings. Behera heard about *'doing good for even those who do evil to you'* but did not come across or even heard about those who had this characteristic as their inherent nature. He thought such qualities existed only in precept. He gradually became aware that he had led a worst type of life in the past; he felt disgust. He now tasted the nectar of righteousness and has become addicted to the emergent bliss. He was determined to stick to the path of righteousness for the rest of his life.

The judgment on the court case was pronounced on December 31, 1977. Behera was awarded imprisonment till the end of the day along with a penalty of Rs.2000/-. Behera did not have any money on him. Nor anyone came to the court for him. Appa Rao paid that money to the court on behalf of Behera and got him released.

Without losing any time, Behera wanted to see Amma and requested brother Appa Rao to take him to Jillellamudi. Both of them arrived in Jillellamudi. Ever desiring to internalise and put Amma's preachings into practice, Appa Rao was overwhelmed at the opportunity bestowed by Amma to put her message into practice in case of Behera, and for the inspiration. He whole heartedly prostrated in front of Amma. Behera too prostrated in front of Amma for showing him a new path of righteousness.

The entire room was glowing with radiance emerging from Amma's visage. Amma took both Behera and Appa Rao on her two sides. If every person can treat every other human being as his own brethren and shower compassion, then it is truly a tribute for 'Vishwajanee', our venerable Mother. The entire philosophy of Amma's incarnation of loving every human being is to initiate each and every one of her children into the realm of compassion; to drive home in the society the truth that *'we are all children of our Mother'*. If we can understand this doctrine, and not only ingrain it in our blood but also put it into practice, then only we become true heirs of Amma. We will prove ourselves to be her children who have born sharing her blood.

In the event, does this world not become a heaven?

It is not a Punishment but Training

You have read the previous chapter which is reproduced from the editorial of Matrusri by brother Ramakrishna. Amma's miracles are of different nature: she transforms man into god; she converts 'evil persons' into good beings; protects those who come into her shelter; teaches duties and responsibilities; takes people into her fold with love and affection. And she does all this and more in a matter-of-fact manner displaying love and affection as a mother. The gist of the essay is all the above.

I want to share some insight here in connection with the event with Behera. After I lost my truck, I was depressed and upset. At that time, the following was my conversation with Amma on telephone.

Me: Amma, our truck is stolen.

Amma: I know, son. The person who stole must be going through a lot of difficulties.

Me: What do you want me to do now?

Amma: What is there for you to do? Whatever is to happen will happen. Just keep watching.

Me: How can I just be watching?!

Amma: Keep seeing and enjoy.

(Remaining unconcerned at whatever happens is the quality of a stoic; if I had that quality, why will I come into your fold, Amma, I thought).

Me: In that case, at least give me the strength to forbear this.

Amma: That strength is within you.

My pain

Knowing that I lost my truck, Amma is more concerned about that unknown person and his difficulties. I considered Amma to be my everything - mother, father, teacher, god…knowing this too well, yet she is so indifferent to my plight! Instead of sympathizing with me, she is sympathizing with the person who has committed the crime of stealing my goods?! My mind was filled with all such thoughts. I was in pain.

Behera's behaviour

Behera called up a transport owner familiar to him in Vijayawada. He said that his truck driver has stolen the goods in the truck and that he is coming to him with money and therefore please try and settle the matter.

Behera deposited the money made from selling my groundnut oil barrels with an acquaintance in Hyderabad. When Behera went to him and asked for his money back after some time, the person outright denied his being given any money by Behera. Shocked, Behera returned to Vijayawada, not knowing what to do.

In the first place, why did Behera think of returning my money? I ascribe the change in Behera to Amma. She does miracles in different ways. Although Amma asked me to keep watching and do nothing, she herself did not keep quiet. An invisible spirit haunted Behera wherever he went and all the time. On earlier occasions, when Behera stole money and goods, he neither experienced this type of thoughts or feelings, nor was upset any time. This time, not able to bear the emotional pressure, he decided to commit suicide by throwing himself under a running train. Suddenly, there was a flash in his mind. Why not I return the money to the rightful owner and die anyway? Thus, he made the call to Vijayawada.

Behera reached Vijayawada without any money on his person. We too reached Vijayawada. Alongside, the person who loaded the groundnut barrels on to the truck also arrived there accompanied by the police. Since Behera did not have any money on him, the negotiators too could do nothing. The police lodged Behera in Emmiganur jail. I got him released on bail as described earlier. I also took him on a pilgrimage and shared him Amma's philosophy.

While on pilgrimage, one day Behera and I reached Mantralayam. As we both were having coffee in a hotel, Behera suddenly lost his cool. He started crying. When I asked him why he was crying, he pointed to a small boy washing cups in the hotel. This sight made him to recall the conversation that he overheard between two inmates while he was in the Emmiganur jail. He felt that even though the two inmates committed small thefts under compulsion, they are put in jail. If, in the final hearing in his case, he is awarded a jail sentence, then his son (currently one year old) would also be met with similar fate, and subjected to such hard work; his wife would become a destitute. Their life would become pitiable depending upon others' sympathies. He knew that his own relatives never showed any concern for him including when he was in jail. Surely, they will not bother about his wife and child. Enveloped with all these thoughts, Behera pleaded with me to pardon him considering him as a younger brother.

The Heart that Moved

Amma wanted to reform those who are not on the righteousness track through compassion and understanding. I believe that one who is a true follower of Amma, adopts her philosophy in letter and spirit. I empathised with Behera taking pity on his condition.

True, if my brother commits a mistake, will I take revenge? I felt deeply sympathetic towards Behera. I appointed a lawyer for Behera in the court. Amma has given me inspiration to expand the horizons of my empathy and thereby inculcate magnanimity. On my advice, Behera was chanting Amma's name with a desire to escape the impending jail term. It was 4 pm. The court closes for the day by 5 pm. Surprisingly, and contrary to our belief that Behera would certainly be awarded jail sentence, the judge awarded him a penalty of just Rs.2000/- and jail term till the end of the day; in other words, just one hour of jail sentence! I paid the penalty on behalf of Behera. After he was released from jail, I took him to Jillellamudi. As soon as he saw Amma, tears started rolling down his eyes betraying his apparently stony heart. Amma took him into her fold and gently patted his head. Unaccustomed to affection, Behera was shaken, and fell at the feet of Amma as tears flowed down his eyes. Who will not be moved in the divine presence of Amma?

Amma's eyes were also moist. Probably she is elated at the change of heart in her child. While Amma was feeding Behera pieces of orange, Behera also took pieces of the fruit from Amma's hand and was feeding her. That was a sight to be witnessed. This is exactly the relation between mother and a son. No child is bad or good, his habits are good or bad. For a mother, he always remains her child. Talk about eligibility, Amma says that no one can come beyond the 7th mile without her wish. What more evidence does one require for Amma's message 'I am the Mother and you are my children.'

The Mahamantra

When I lost my truck, Amma communicated a message to me. In reply to my question as to what I should do then, Amma's message was to enjoy whatever was unfolding. This I consider as the greatest message she has given me. That has become my *Mahamantra* ever since.

Whenever I had to pass through difficulties in life and subjected to fears both known and unknown, I used to remember Amma's saying: *'Whatever is destined will happen; just keep watching happily.'* I used to think, instead of watching silently, what else could I do? Amma has also reminded me that the capacity to forbear the travails and tribulations of life is within me. These messages helped me settle down whenever I was upset at least after some time.

After a lapse of time, I reached a stage where I was witnessing the happenings without getting affected myself. This also helped me advance significantly in my spiritual path. In the initial years of my meditation practice, I used to enjoy happiness emerging out of the thoughts. Later on, it became a habit to witness the thoughts that were occurring in the mind in a detached manner.

This message of Amma is nothing but a path to sublimation. What further proof is required to understand the miracle of Amma's philosophy?!

My Family in the Protective Ring of Amma

During the days when I was trading groundnut oil, my son Krishnababu collected Rs.1.75 lakh dues in cash from Kaikaluru and was returning on a scooter. Suddenly, a cow crossed his path; he fell down along with his scooter while trying to avoid the animal. His cash bag fell at a distance while he lost consciousness. It became dark. During those days, a van of Sri Vishwajananee Trust used to shuttle from Kaikaluru to Eluru transporting devotees coming for Amma's darshan. The van did not have head lights. Since the van also did not have proper brakes, the driver was driving at a slow speed. What was noteworthy was that the van came up to the point on the road where my son was lying, and stopped. My son who was unconscious was spotted, and the bag with cash was found. The visiting card of our shop was found in the cash bag. They brought my son along with the cash bag to my shop. I was very much thankful to them and offered some cash reward for their help but they refused. My son who had head injury with clothes full of blood stains, was taken to a hospital and admitted. The doctor announced that my son had to be kept under observation for 24 hours. Prior to that, the doctor said he would not hazard any guess. My wife and I prayed. My daughter-in-law prayed Shirdi Sai Baba. Shirdi Sai Baba appeared to my wife in a dream during early hours, and announced 'I only saved your son' and disappeared.

My son passed the critical period of observation without any untoward event. My older daughter's son, Phanibabu, aged 8 years, meanwhile, was desirous of seeing me. He left his house for Eluru without informing anyone in his house. He reached Vijayawada railway station at 6 pm. Being too young, he was not aware of which train to take. On entering the railway station, he just boarded some train that was stationed

on the platform. At night, he felt very hungry. He suddenly felt scared and started crying. A fellow passenger saw this and asked him whether he wanted to eat something. After taking the food offered, he slept off. It was 10 am when he woke up the next day. As he opened his eyes, he noticed a board, *Eluru Railway Station*. He came out of the railway station, got into a rickshaw and reached home. I was surprised on seeing him at that time of the day as there was no train expected at that point of time. If he has boarded a train at 6 pm the previous evening, then it should not have taken this much duration. Several questions crossed my mind. Who was the person who gave him food noticing that he was hungry? How can the boy land at Eluru Railway Station when he woke up the next morning? This was more than sheer coincidence and I believe that no more evidence is required to prove that Amma always protects our family.

Amma - The Saviour

The marriage of my youngest daughter, Vaidehi, was decided to be held on August 24, 1989 in Eluru. Due to cyclone that struck those days, Eluru turned into an island due to water logging all around the town. It was time that the bride groom's party from Vijayawada should have reached. Unfortunately, no transport of any kind was plying. Trains were cancelled as the railway track was inundated. The previous day, on August 23, the railway administration decided to pilot run a passenger (slow moving) train on trial. Somehow the bride groom's party came to know of this. Around ten important persons including the bride groom set off on this passenger train and reached Eluru. After this successful pilot run, on August 24, all the train services were restored. It so happened that our traditional music party (*bhajantrilu)* presumed that the marriage would not take place due to the flood situation and therefore did not arrive. Coincidentally, there was another marriage scheduled to take place in the marriage hall across the road. The traditional music party of that marriage party has arrived, but not the marrying parties. The music party agreed to our proposal to provide the traditional music for my daughter's marriage. As the weather condition also improved very much on the marriage day, the event was consummated satisfactorily with the blessings of all.

Another Experience

The first delivery of my daughter Vaidehi was quite difficult. The doctors carried out caesarean operation to deliver the baby. During the second delivery too, the doctors insisted that caesarean operation alone was the recourse. Otherwise, there would be danger to the mother's life.

My daughter surrendered to Amma completely praying that she alone was her saviour. She kept Amma's photograph near my daughter's pillow in the operation theatre. Most surprisingly, my daughter envisioned that Amma was already seated in the operation theatre. This gave my daughter the much needed confidence and peace of mind. During the operation, Vaidehi felt that Amma's person got immersed into the frame of the doctor and conducted the operation.

There was further surprise in store for us. The doctor explained that while the operation went on smoothly, he felt that he did not carry out the operation. Someone has entered into his body and conducted the operation! The operation that he thought would be complicated turned out to be simple!! He was all wonder at this. My belief that my family has always been under the protective sheet of Amma has been further confounded.

How Can She be Amma to All?

En route to Madras for ear operation of my wife, we went to Jillellamudi on August 5, 1976 to seek the blessings of Amma. My wife was reflecting on *how Amma can be Amma for all?* If her own mother were to be alive, she would have accompanied her to Madras for her daughter's operation. This Mother is not doing so!

That night we slept in the premises of Hymalayam temple. My wife experienced a dream in which Amma has donned a doctor's robe, and conducted her ear operation in Madras hospital. This gave me tremendous courage.

As we reached Madras, the hospital authorities said that since we arrived without an appointment, we should come on another day with prior appointment. This was a big setback for us. Not knowing what to do, I took out the vermilion (*kumkum*) Amma gave us after blessing us in Jillellamudi while we were leaving. I dropped a little in my mouth, praying Amma, 'I do not know what you do. You must make the doctor see us today.'

In the meanwhile, we received a message from the doctor to see him in the examination room for preliminary tests. He told us that the time slot fell vacant due to the inability of a scheduled patient to arrive due to unavoidable circumstances. After all the tests were done, we were allocated August 21 for the operation which was conducted successfully.

While the operation was going on, my wife felt that Amma herself was conducting the operation. On top of it, while the nurses were leading my wife to toilet for urination, she felt that Amma was actually accompanying her. It was clear that Amma had responded to my wife's doubts whether this Mother can accompany her who is not her own daughter to Madras to be on her side during the operation. Isn't it that Amma has

fulfilled her child's needs and desires? Is it any less than a miracle?

Further miracle was awaiting us. We stayed for 5 days in someone's house in Madras. My wife was suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting. Although not related to us, the lady of the house served my wife including feeding food like one's own mother. She accompanied her to the toilet whenever my wife needed for vomiting and diarrhoea. We believe that this is nothing but the blessing of Amma who inspired the lady to fulfil the role of my wife's mother.

The Marriage that Was Not, Conducted by Amma

When we were discussing about the date and place of marriage for my son with the bride's parents in Narsaraopeta, I insisted that the marriage should take place only in Jillellamudi in the presence of Amma; that was my condition. The groom's parents agreed to this. However, some members of the groom's family desired that the marriage take place in Narsaraopeta as their daughter was the youngest and that there were no more marriages possible in their family for a long time to come. They tried their best to convince me through mediators. For me too, it was the marriage of my only son. Therefore, I desired that the marriage should take place in Jillellamudi only in the presence of Amma. So, I assured them that I would take the responsibility of conducting a grand marriage in Jillellamudi at my expense. For some reasons, my desire was not fulfilled. Everyone tried to convince me. Finally, they agreed to carry out the function of making bride and bridegroom in Jillellamudi. I returned home, but was feeling low. I was recollecting what Amma used to say, *'Do not blame anyone. Whoever does anything, it is only after inspiration. If you have any issues, then blame the One who inspires!'* I thought, 'Yes, it's true. I desired that my son's marriage should take place in the benign presence of Amma. But that does not seem to happen. If my goddess Amma who inspires everything did not wish the same, why did she not tell me when I expressed my desire with her?' I was so restless and disturbed that I went to Jillellamudi, and wept in the lap of Amma. Amma gave me solace by saying that she will conduct the marriage. Although Amma gave me this assurance, I was not sure how this was possible since I had already agreed for Narsaraopeta as the marriage venue with the groom's parents. I expressed the same doubt. Amma said,

'Son, don't worry, I will conduct the marriage myself.' I thought Amma would convince the groom's party to honour my desire. So thinking, I left the place after Amma applied vermilion on my forehead and returned home in Eluru.

After two days, a thought flashed in my mind, 'In any case, we are going to Jillellamudi for conducting the bride groom and bride ceremony; why not we conduct the *'upanayanam'* (thread ceremony) of my son too?' When I asked my wife for her opinion, she concurred immediately.

I called up brother Ramakrishna. He assured me that he will make all arrangements for both the functions. And that he will also organise with Amma to carry out the bride groom and bride function.

The auspicious time for the thread ceremony was fixed as 8 am., and for the bride groom and bride ceremony as 11 am. We reached Jillellamudi the previous afternoon. As the marriage was to be performed at Narsaraopeta, only five of us went to Jillellamudi.

Amma asked me if she wanted the bride groom and bride functions to be done jointly or separately. Normally, these functions are carried out separately by the parents of the marrying parties in their respective homes. I told Amma to do whichever way she likes. The thread ceremony took place in the morning with Amma administering the *'Brahmopadesam*[16]*'* to the groom. The boy was then seated in the presence of Amma. A black spot was applied to the cheek of the groom as per the tradition to ward off 'evil eyes'. Amma poured auspicious yellowed rice on the heads of both the groom and

[16] In Hinduism, the ceremony is performed on boys of at least 7 years of age from the Brahmin varna, of at least 13 years from the Kshatriya varna, and of at least 17 years from the Vaishya varna. The youngster is taught during the ceremony the secret of life through Brahmopadesam (revealing the nature of Brahman, the Ultimate Reality) or the Gayatri mantra. The child then becomes qualified for life as a student or Brahmachari, as prescribed in the Manusmriti, widely knows as Laws of Manu.

boy. She shared a banana between the groom and the bride. It occurred to me that this was actually the marriage ceremony that I was witnessing! Amma has kept up her promise to her son in this manner! Who else but a mother can fulfil the desires of a son?

Amma the Teacher

During 1974, Amma camped in the house of Sri Rajagopalachari during her Hyderabad visit. Sri Rajagopala Chary is an internationally renowned person. He also served as the President of Sri Viswajananee Parishad.

I went to Hyderabad along with Swami Ramadas. It was around 11 am. The entire house was brimming with devotees. Amma was seated in a big hall. There were almost a hundred devotees seated in front of her. Some devotees were offering worship to Amma's feet. In the neighbouring room, Sri Sripada Gopalakrishnamurthy was delivering a lecture. I wanted to listen to his lecture; but to do so, I had to pass through the hall where Amma was seated. I wanted to hide from Amma's vision and go into the next room. So, I discreetly tried to walk through the hall bending myself to escape Amma's vision. Nonetheless, Amma did notice me and said, 'Son, come here and sit down. I will tell you so you can understand easily.' I cannot comprehend why Amma said so, but obliged and sat down near her. Subsequently, she explained many things as a teacher. She appeared as a god to me. When a practitioner reaches a certain stage, he takes any message from the teacher as an instruction, doctrine or a *mantra*. That becomes his guiding path. Amma recognised me as a practitioner long time ago, and has been guiding me as a teacher from time to time. For me, Amma is a teacher, God and everything.

The Message of Honour of Duty

I used to go for *satsang* everyday evening. My wife used to be engaged in reading spiritual books. One day, she attended the discourse of Sri Vidyaprakashanandagiri Swami where essays from the Gita were also being read out daily. At one instant, as she looked at the photograph of Amma, she thought, 'My husband goes out for discourse every day and gets to know many new things. I cannot go out and therefore I am denied of this opportunity. 'Who else can tell me other than you?' No sooner than she had these thoughts that she heard the voice of Amma asking her to refer to a particular page in the book she was reading. That page contained like this:

Gita 9/27
Yatkaroshi yadasnasi yajnahoshidadasiyat
Yattapasyasi Kaunteya yatkurushashwa madarpanam

Meaning:
Arjuna: The act you do, the food you take
The belch you give out, the donation you give
The *tapas* you carry out, offer all these to me.

The statement, 'If one has faith that all action is in the service of God, then the physical life does not come in the way of spirituality' is nothing but the essence of Bhagawad Gita. Amma too preached as a guru, *'If you offer whatever you do to me, there is no prayer that you have not offered to me.'*

'You eat what you have to your satisfaction
And then share with others with love' said Amma.

You Take Care of The Trust, I Will Take Care of You

My third son-in-law Sri Chakka Sreemannarayana is serving the Trust out of his complete faith in Amma. He is also an office bearer of the Trust. Amma's blessings are abundantly showered on his family.

One day my daughter (his wife), heard these words while she was doing puja in their home temple, *'You take care of the Trust, I will take care of you.'*

My son-in-law collects foodgrains every year and sends them to Jillellamudi for Dhanyabhishekam function held every year on February 23. Beginning with a mere 25 bags ten years ago in 1996, this collection reached 240 bags by 2006[17]. He is always on the forefront of any function that takes place in Jillellamudi. He donates liberally for clothes and foodgrains regularly - the two favourite activities conducted enthusiastically in Jillellamudi.

Let us listen to his experience in his own words:

'I did not know anything about Amma till my marriage was performed in her presence. From the day of marriage, I developed an emotional attachment for Amma. I have numerous experiences on this. Amma has ensured that the helping nature in me spread its roots extensively.

'Some time ago, my second son by mistake fell into a well and died. Coming to know of this news, my father-in-law set off immediately. So too brother Ramakrishna; as his car negotiated the curve leading to our village (Surampalli), Amma appeared to him in the car itself and said, 'the mother ought to have died;

[17] By 2013, this figure has reached 340 bags indicating the persistent efforts of brother Sreemannarayana.

instead the child died.' A similar experience occurred to a devotee of Devi in Kankipadu. She too heard a voice that said, 'In fact, the mother should have died; instead the child had died. Ask them to correct vastu dosha of their house.' When we got our house checked up by a vastu expert, it was true that our house had a defect. We got it demolished and re-constructed as per vastu.

'This incident reinforced my belief that Amma protects our family all the time. In turn, Amma gave me the opportunity to serve the Trust by participating in its various activities.'

I took four buses full of persons for the 'Lalithakotinamarchana' in Jillellamudi on November 11, 2006. After the event ended, I bid good bye to those devotees and stayed back in Jillellamudi. In the meanwhile, I heard a voice that asked me to return. I shared this with sister Vasundhara. She said that there must be some meaning to this message; and she asked me to leave immediately. I reached my native village Surampalli where my responsibility for an important function was awaiting. If I had not reached, matters would have been different.

I find that Amma has always been protecting me. These are some of my first hand experiences. What more evidence is required for Amma's statement, 'You take care of the Trust, and I will take care of you.'

Would Amma Come To Our House?

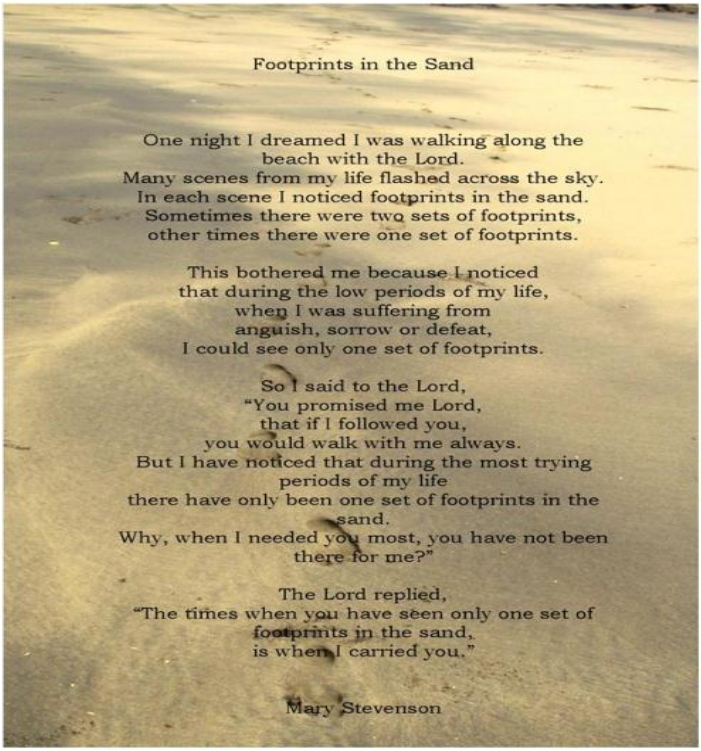
My wife was scheduled to undergo a big operation during the year 2004. Before she was administered anaesthesia, my wife longed for the presence of Amma at this time. As if her wish was granted, she saw Amma enter the operation theatre.

After the operation was done, my wife was gradually regaining consciousness. She was laid on the stretcher to be taken to the hospital room. She saw Amma pushing the stretcher and could not believe it. She informed us about this soon after reaching the hospital room from the theatre. After regaining complete consciousness, the first words my wife spoke were, 'It is already late. Give breakfast to Amma.' Whenever we conduct *Ekaham* and *Saptaham* functions, there used to be more than the expected number of devotees. My wife used to pray Amma with folded hands to enable her to feed all those that arrived, to each one's satisfaction. The cooked food (*prasadam*) then used to be sufficient to feed any number of devotees that arrived. We used to find that the *prasadam* had the marks of fingers of Amma as if she had received the offering.

All these are nothing but evidences that Amma is always protecting our family by being with us all the time.

Sometime ago, one day, when my wife was working in the kitchen engrossed in figuring out the number of persons she should cook for that day, she heard a voice advising her to cook for one extra person always. From that day onwards, my wife always cooks for one extra person. Isn't it evidence enough that Amma continues to guide her devotees by appropriate messages?

Foot Prints in the Sand


Footprints in the Sand
One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with the Lord.
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints,
other times there were one set of footprints.
This bothered me because I noticed
that during the low periods of my life,
when I was suffering from
anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.
So I said to the Lord,
"You promised me Lord,
that if I followed you,
you would walk with me always.
But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life
there have only been one set of footprints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most, you have not been there for me?"
The Lord replied,
"The times when you have seen only one set of footprints in the sand,
is when I carried you."
Mary Stevenson

T. Anasuya, B.E.,
Assistant Engineer (A.P. Transco)
Vijayawada.

For our family who repose complete faith in Amma, she has been highly protective of us always.

T. Anasuya's mother had her *'Seemantham'* function conducted by Amma. This resulted in high education and spiritual thought in Anasuya.

Purnananda Swami and Me

Purnananda Swami was a firm believer in Amma; for him she was an incarnation of Goddess Bhuvaneswari herself. Before his soul merged into the Almighty, he used to live in his Ashram in Srisailam doing *tapas (*penance*).* He and his disciples used to visit Jillellamudi very often and participate in the functions of Jillellamudi. His disciples continue the practice of their guru.

During July 20-27, 1991, the Chinmaya Mission carried out a *Sadhana Shibir* (meditation camp). Along with some brothers, I reached Srisailam to participate in the function. The Ashram of Purnananda Swami was in Sunnipenta, near Srisailam. I visited the Ashram on July 24, 1991, in connection with my 57th birthday. Swamiji inquired about my avocation. I said that I was doing Lalithasahasranama parayanam for the past 12 years. I also requested him to advise me on any modifications in the process of the parayanam. Following this, I pleaded with him for his blessings for me to achieve self-actualisation. Swamiji gave some insightful suggestions and said, 'If you want to achieve self-actualisation, you have to clean your *nadi* (nodes in the physical body) first; for this, one has to get up before sun-rise and drink water stored overnight in a copper vessel[18] along with *tulasi* leaves. One can begin with taking one glass of water, which can be increased to two, and to three. This practice cleans up the *nadi*, improves blood circulation and oxygen intake, leading to improved concentration during meditation. This should be combined with taking *sattvic*[19] food as far as possible. The dinner should

[18] The copper vessel should be of 100% pure copper to be effective.

[19] A *sattvic* diet, also referred to as a yogic diet or sentient diet, is a diet based on foods that-according to Ayurveda and Yoga, are strong in the sattva guna, and lead to clarity and *upeksa* (equanimity) of mind while

comprise cow's milk only, which would help release unwanted heat from the body. During the initial ten days, one would feel that the body has warmed up. However, subsequently, the body will cool down like a hot pan that cools down when adequate water is sprinkled on it. The cooled down body is now better positioned for aiding in meditation. The meditation process will be greatly aided by further increasing the *sattvic* content of food. On a full moon day, if one does Lalithasahasranama parayanam while gazing at the moon through the ***bhrukuti***[20], then after sometime a minute pore gets formed thereby facilitating absorption of the moon rays into the body. At this point, one can notice a minute moon light. This moon light is to be considered as Lalithaparameshwari. After some more practice, one will be able to see in himself the goddess Lalithaparameshwari herself.

As one advances in this practice, one loses interest in this materialistic world but gains inner joy. Swamiji told me that he will send inform me when that moment arrives. On July 25, 1991, during my visit to the Ashram, I sat down in the presence of Swamiji. By that time, I had been practising *Kundalini Yoga* to a certain extent. However, all of a sudden, in the presence of Swamiji, the *kundalini* in my *mooladhara chakra* began to move noticeably.

Experience in the Ashram

The next day, July 26, 1991, was *guru poornima*. The previous evening, I reached the Ashram of Purnananda swami.

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also being beneficial to the body. Such foods include water, cereal grains, legumes, vegetables, fruits, nuts, unpasteurized and unhomogenized fresh milk and fresh milk derivatives (mostly ghee, but also butter, cream, cheese (paneer), and yoghurt (lassi)), and raw honey. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sattvic_diet

[20] The small place between the two eye brows where vermilion is applied by certain classes (*varnas*) of people.

Swamiji was seated under a tree in the Ashram that was considered very pious. The disciples were present with the Swamiji. The ambience reflected peace. Swamiji was enjoying the presence of children. He was patting their backs affectionately. He was also caressing their heads. Likewise, some disciples were enjoying bliss in the divine lap of the Swamiji. Seeing this scenario, I expected that Swamiji would ask me too to join the disciples and the children. But he did not even notice my presence. I felt neglected and remembered Amma. I prayed, 'Amma, you are not present physically in this world. Otherwise, I would have placed my head in your lap and enjoyed your motherly love. I do not know how you are going to fulfil my desire. You must do so.' Amma did not delay in bestowing her grace. Suddenly, my back became stiff. My vision focused onto my *bhrukuti.* I felt that a thin, incessant flow started like a thread of ants from my *mooladhara* to *Ajna chakra*[21]*.* That was a unique experience. I recognised that Amma always has this kindness for me. I offered my grateful thanks to Amma. I do not know if my *nadi* has become clean but Amma has bestowed her full blessings on me. With this peaceful body and mind, I took leave of the Swamiji, went to the kitchen where a photograph of Amma was hung on a wall, and paid my respectful thanks by offering a flower garland.

[21] Chakras, in Hindu metaphysical tradition and other belief systems, are centres of Prāṇa, the life force, or vital energy. Chakras correspond to vital points in the physical body i.e. major plexuses of arteries, veins and nerves. Texts and teachings present different numbers of chakras. Sahasrara is at the top being concerned with pure consciousness, and Mooladhara at the bottom being concerned with matter, which is seen simply as condensed, or gross consciousness.

I Witnessed Myself

When Amma's health was not well during the year 1975, all of us were conducting half-*Ekaham*s, *Ekaham*s and *Saptahams* for her good health. On a particular day, we were staying in the house of Patri Kamalamma in Eluru and conducting *Ekaham*. That night, while everyone was asleep, only Boppudi Ramabrahmam and I were awake.

Kamalamma was a great devotee, chanting Amma's names always. She used to forget herself while chanting the name of Amma. In her ecstasy, we used to notice that her facial features underwent a distinct change, as also her gestures. We used to consider her as someone possessed of Amma in that state.

Kamalamma noticed that I was in pain due to Amma's recent physical demise. She used to say that although Amma appeared to be suffering, she would not have any pain or difficulty. She is beyond pain and suffering. So saying, she placed her foot on my head. Immediately, my eyes drooped and eventually shut. I got detached with my physical body, and went beyond to witness all the persons present in the hall including my own physical body in pain. I cannot describe the ecstasy I enjoyed.

When I narrated this incident to Y.Ch. Ramakrishna, a knowledgeable, wise person, he remarked that my subtle body witnessed my physical body. He said that enlightened yogis can witness not only their bodies but also others' physical bodies, along with their natural characteristics.

I believe that Amma has thus helped me achieve self-actualisation by holding my hand and giving me opportunity to undergo the unique experience.

<u>You</u> Do Not Exist!!

Those were the days when I was going through deep financial crisis. Unable to manage any further, I went to Amma and questioned her, 'When I ask people, *Why did God do this Creation? They say, it is his past time.* Why should God put us in troubles for his past time? ' To this, Amma merely answered, 'In the first place, you don't even exist!' and kept quiet. On some other occasion, she told others, 'When **<u>you</u>** do not exist, it is all 'I' that exists.'

Although I did not understand what each of these statements really meant, I simply accepted the above statements of Amma as a *mantra*, a divine message. However, the yearning to understand their full import, made me restless. I set off to further inquire into their meaning. Interestingly, the books I already read and the discussions I already had with learned men began to reveal new perspectives! Even those aspects that I thought were very well known to me started showing up new dimensions!

I realised that the teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, *'Who am I?'* was part of the meaning in the sentences uttered by Amma. Bhagavan said this in his 'Ramana Geeta' thus:

Hridayakuhara madhye kevalam Brahma matram
Hyamahamiti sakshadatmarupena bhati

Meaning:
I am just the void in the middle of the heart
'I' shines as a separate entity

In the words, 'Do *<u>you</u>* exist?' '*where does the 'you' exist, does it exist in the first place, how does it exist'*, are the aspects of

inquiry that Amma was asking us to ponder on. In the Bhagawad Gita, the same concept is communicated in the Kshetrakshetrajna chapter, thus:

Gita 13/2

Kshetramjnamchapi mamvidhi - sarva kshetreshu Bharata.

Meaning:

The One who resides in you, is the same That resides in everyone.

Sri Ramana Maharshi has revealed in the following two slokas of 'Ramana Geeta', the way of identifying the 'I':

Hrividivisha manasa svam chinvatho majnathava
Pavana chalanarodhathma nishtho bhavatmam.

Meaning:

You may go in search of Enlightenment, carry out Self-Inquiry, or achieve Equanimity through embedding mind in the heart to anchor the Self.

My quest for understanding life progressed along these lines. Amma has been my philosopher and guide. When I look back at the trajectory of my life under the guidance of Amma, my body trembles.

The force that dwells everywhere is God.
That force is the basis for everything.
God is Dual, God is One.
Although the Twain comprises God, Creation is possible only with Two.

‘Soo hum’ and the Kundalini Yoga Practice

I once asked Amma, ‘Amma, some people are advising me to do *Soo hum* practice, but some others say that married persons are not eligible. What is your advice to me?’ Amma said, ‘My son, I am telling you, go ahead and practise *Soo hum*.’ So saying, she also gave me an insightful message, *‘Whatever gives you comfort, you do that.’*

This message was a divine doctrine for me. After Amma applied vermilion on my forehead, I left the place. Unknowingly, I began chanting Amma’s name: *‘Jayahomata Sri Anasuya, Rajarajeshwari Sri Paratpari.’* As I realised this, I was surprised, but felt happy. I turned myself into a witness for me doing this chanting that continued for many years.

Over a period of time, the frequency of my breathing during the chant got reduced. To tune it well, I added the words, ‘Am Aaa’ and carried on with my meditation.

Sometimes, I used to chant ‘Soo…’ while inhaling, and ‘hum’ while exhaling. After some lapse of time, in 1986, I took ‘Kundalini deeksha’ in the ‘Sulabhatara Kundalini Yoga (SKY)’ set up by Sri Vedadri Maharshi, under Aruna Babu, and obtained Master’s degree. The life energy that flows from *Mooladhara* to *Sahasraram* via *Sushumna nadi* is called Kundalini.

My practice of Kundalini has enabled me to achieve life energy flow through all the six *nadis*, to all over my body. This way my practice has gone through different stages and phases. Amma has guided me to acquire different practices needed for me.

Focus on Breath

Once when I was conversing with Amma, she asked me to focus on breath. I followed her instruction faithfully. Over a period of time, this led to my becoming a 'witness' to my own breathing. Whatever the word, 'focus', 'observe', 'watch' or 'witness', they all mean the same.

Life Pulse

The breathing in and breathing out is due to the contraction and expansion of the lungs. This represents the life force. The process of breathing in and breathing out due to the contraction and expansion of lungs is termed as inhalation and exhalation. Due to this, there is attraction of life force from the periphery to the centre and from centre to the periphery. One cycle of inhalation and exhalation is called a Life Pulse.

The Life Force

When one starts observing the breath, the pace of breath slowly reduces. Then, the 'time duration' between inhalation and exhalation reduces so much that it appears as one life force or life energy. This life force is called the Universal Force, Universal Life Force, or Kundalini or Parashakti.

This Universal Life Force permeates the entire universe. Put differently, this Life Force is prevalent in all animate and inanimate matter, including trees, and all life forms, stars, planets, atoms, nuclei, and meta physical matter, and drives the Universe.

When a Man releases this Life Force through use of his senses, he achieves great physical and mental accomplishments and gains universal reputation and recognition. He can become a great scientist. If he turns inwards and achieves self-realisation, then he becomes a great

yogi, an enlightened soul; he enjoys eternal supreme bliss to finally obtain *moksha* or sublimation.

To observe breath simply implies offering penance to the divine Life Force. To worship Life Force implies worshipping the Universal Life Force, that is Amma.

Wise Men attain control over their breath through *observing* it. Yogis control their mind through *control* of breath. If you observe mind, the breath becomes inactive; if you observe breath, the mind becomes inactive.

To stabilise the wavering mind is nothing but *sadhana* or practice. Those who cannot engage in self-inquiry indulge in worrying about life. Those who find it difficult to stabilise their wavering mind should observe their breath so that they could stabilise their mind. Ultimately, they can reach the stage of being able to observe oneself who observes his own mind. Then, they go into a state of Awareness.

The place of heart

Like the rays of the Moon, the Life Force emerges from the heart and travels to the middle of the body, to the stomach and below, spreading to all *nadis*.

If you want to trace the origin of smoke, that is fire, then you have to follow the smoke. Similarly, if you follow the origin of breath, you will reach its origin, the heart.

The place of heart, though, is said to be located below the chest towards the right[22], in fact, it is observed to be spread all over the body. The body is a construct of cells; when one enters into the highest state of meditation, that is *Samadhi,* one

[22] As per medical science, two-thirds of the heart is located to the left of the midline of the body and 1/3 is to the right.
http://science.howstuffworks.com/life/human-biology/heart1.htm

can observe that the body disaggregates into innumerable cells. At this stage, one can find that each cell has the Life Force that contracts and expands the cells. As one advances in this observation process, one finds that the 'time duration' between contraction and expansion disappears leading to a state of peace. The mind that achieves this state of peace observes the movement of each cell. Not just the contraction and expansion, but the mind also observes the infinitesimal time taken for each such contraction and expansion. Finally, Man himself becomes this consciousness.

Sadhana or Practice

When one observes the breath for a few minutes, the thoughts tend to reduce. At this juncture, it is possible to trace the origin of thoughts to the heart, and concentrate therein. Upon practice, the mind can be fixed in the heart, over a period of time, to obliteration of thoughts. From then onwards, the Life Force begins to flow resulting in good physical and mental health.

The unique characteristic of the mind is to always worry about the past and become anxious about future; it does not as much focus on the present. Since the breath occurs in the present, if one observes the breath, the mind attains focus and comes to observe the present. This way, there is stabilisation of mind in the heart.

My Experience

I began watching my breath as advised by Amma. After practising for some time, I reached the stage of observing my mind too. At this stage, observing the thoughts, I made modifications that aided my practice. On continuous practice

for quite some time, I could gradually anchor my mind in my heart.

Sometimes, when I was under observation process of my breath, beyond the inhalation and exhalation process (remember, the negligible time duration between each cycle of inhalation and exhalation described earlier), the Life Force used to emerge from the Mooladhara to Sushumna nadi and then to the heart from where it was transported to sahasrara. This way I continued to practise and experience the flow of Life Force permeating my entire body. Among the nadis, the two prominent nadis, namely Ida and Pingala Sushumna nadis do not have physical manifestation. They cannot be seen with the naked eye. They are just energy forms and remain in the domain of experience.

One day, I went to the Shirdi Sai Temple for the afternoon harathi. My mind was completely engrossed on Shridi Sai. At that time, I experienced a divine Spirit surround me in an irregular loop from my head to toe, entered into my body and expanded all over my inside. I realised that my body now got converted itself into a divine energy field. It was not until some time that I could come out of that state. On subsequent days, whenever my mind was anchored in the heart, my entire body used to get filled with Life Pulses. The next was a state of non-motion when my physical body used to become light and peaceful.

As a train approaching a railway station reduces its speed, in a similar manner, as the mind gets rooted in the heart, the thoughts keep reducing. Like the train which stops on arrival at a station, the thoughts also become stationary, meaning, non-existent, when the mind gets completely anchored in the heart. In this state, the body feels weightless. In this state, I used to observe that without my effort and unknowingly, all my activities were getting accomplished. This state was ephemeral, though. I was just a witness.

Sometimes, I used to feel that my body was filled completely with Life Force and after that getting disaggregated into cells. These cells were involved in exhalation and inhalation. Then all these cells were getting merged into the space. I felt that I was devoid of physical body. This physical body is nothing but a composition of cells.

Sometimes, the body used to get filled up with pulses, convert into a flow and then transform into light; this light expanded all over the body. In this state too, my physical body used to feel very light, experience the state of non-state, and manifest as light.

When I used to observe my breath, I recognised that some force was priming the contraction and expansion of the lungs and thereby controlling my breath and that I am not driving my breath. Probably, Amma wanted me to understand this philosophy and therefore asked me to observe my breath.

Till now, we have discussed above experiences related to the yogic act called control on breathing (that is pranayama). Now let us understand how we could achieve sound physical and mental health with this yogic act.

We suffer from physical and psychological ailments because of our inability to harness the needed Life Force.

When the flow of Universal Life Energy in our body begins to reduce, then obstacles form at the nadis resulting in hindered energy flow. In fact, our thoughts themselves contribute to the blockade of the Universal Life Energy.

When the Universal Life Energy flows unhindered to every cell in the body, then the whole body revitalises. This results in sufficient blood flow and oxygen supply resulting in an active brain, increased memory retention, reduction in physical and mental stress, and curing of physical ailments. There results a state of peace and harmony.

If we desire that the Universal Life Energy should flow unhindered in our body, then meditation is the only easy path. The simplest method is to observe our breath, the yogic act of controlling the breath.

Amma has taught this yoga of control of breath not only to me but also to some other brothers. I met those brothers as also some other saints. I cross verified my understanding and practice of the method with standard texts and was satisfied at my experiences. The texts referred to included Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's *'Upadeshamrutham'*, and *'Upadeshasaram'*. The gist of this chapter is drawn from several treatises such as *Meditation happens: not done*, *Bhushundopakhyanam* in *Yogavashistam, Mandragita* by Ekkirala Krishnamacharyulu, *Sankharavam*, *Lectures on Yoga*, *Sri Vidyopasana in Sri Chakravilasanamu* by Tummulapalli Ramalingeshwara Rao and *Bhagawad Gita* by Gnaneshwari.

One of the few blessed ones to have been bestowed the Yogic control on breath is brother Dinakar. I believe that his dedicated service to the Trust and complete faith in Amma have rendered him eligible for Amma's blessings.

Getting rid of faecal matter enables to remember mantra

Unforgettable mantra is nothing but accomplishment of mantra.

To remember mantra all the time is an evidence, that has no adverse fall out.

Combining Inhalation
And Exhalation
With spelling of letters and words is mantra.

Becoming a Witness to breathing is incessant rendition of Gayatri.

Witnessing Breath –
Conversation with Sri Dinakar

Sri Dinakar is one among the few devotees who were advised by Amma to observe breath. I have been observing Sri Dinakar for quite some time. He used to appear distinct. Whenever I met him, or when he was seated somewhere peacefully, I used to observe his breathing attentively. It occurred to me that he had control over his breath. It almost felt like he was not breathing at all. I wanted to understand about this from him, and therefore on 14 June 2006, I went to his house at 7 am. Brother welcomed me whole heartedly.

Me: Brother, Amma asked you to watch your breath, isn't it?

Brother: That's true. I focus my vision near my nose and observe my breath.

Me: I have been observing your breathing for half an hour. It appears your breath has stopped completely. Even when you are talking, the breath has reduced to the most minimum. This is seen rarely, and in very few persons. How did you get to this state, and for how long. Please let me know your experience.

Brother: I believed that I do not know anything and Amma takes care of everything. After surrendering to Amma, I felt that my physical body was relieved of its burden by Amma. From then onwards, if I close my eyes once, I experience 'detachment' from my physical body. Words flow without my knowledge. I never think in that state on what to talk.

Me: Do you have any experiences about the Light?

Brother: Yes, I do. When I came to Amma's fold, initially, there used to be a light preceding me wherever I went. Then my body also used to get filled up with that light. I observed this happen many times. When I start from Bapatla for Ponnuru, the light used to precede me, all the way.

Me: Brother, you are so fortunate. Only after the ego is demolished will you remain with the 'I' ness devoid of the body. Hands are yours, but the actions are not yours. This, Amma has bestowed you in the form of experience.

It is nothing but sublimation achieved by brother Dinakar through total surrender to Amma.

Bhakti is like childhood

Yoga is like youth

Knowledge is like old age
Bhakti and knowledge always exist as Twain.

What you see in God is Bhakti, what you see in breath is yoga.

When the body parts are tied to mind, it is pranayamam
When the mind is tied to body parts, it is Bhakti.

Witnessing the Divine Light

One day in 1994, when I was in meditation, my entire body was filled up with the Life Force. That force transformed into a Light flow reached my *bhrukuti* (confluence between the eye brows) and assumed the form of a light. [*Atma* in metaphysical state glows on its own] [Vivekananda - Rajayoga, p. 49]. That light the size of my thumb shone brilliantly.

After a few seconds, the light diffused spreading all over my body. The light disappeared. I experienced this process of a small light permeating over my entire body and disappearing two or three times.

The experience in which the light was of thumb size was different from the one when it was diffused in my entire body. The light in the thumb size form was much more intense and radiant than when it got diffused.

Sthalameka mupashrithya - chaitanya Jyotirujjwalam
Sarvam bhasayate deham - Bhaskaro bhuvanam yada
[Ramana Geeta 9/7].

The light on a stage shines all the actors without discrimination but remains a witness. Similarly, the Sun shines his light all over the Universe. In the same manner, the self-luminiscent *Atma Jyoti* though remains at one place spreads all its light in the entire body.

The light in a pot with holes spreads light not only within the pot but also to the outside; in a similar manner, *Atma Jyoti* too spreads light not only in the mind, senses and other parts within the physical body, but also to the matter outside the physical body.

Your *Atma* is self-luminiscent. Like heat is a natural characteristic for fire, light is natural for *Atma*. That light is salvation, the goal. That is the abode of the Universal Spirit, the Universal Life Force or the Universal Life Energy.

The basis for this entire Universe is Awareness, Sound and Light. These are the characteristics of the Universal Spirit.

One day, an Englishman came to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. He stayed on to serve him for some time. He was completely devoted to the Maharshi.

One of those days, Bhagavan gave him a stone that is used for grinding, probably with an intention to bless him. Bhagavan asked the Englishman to keep observing it daily. As instructed by Bhagavan, the Englishman focused his vision on the stone every day. After several days of observation thus, he started seeing Light in place of the stone. It dawned on him that this light was the basis of all matter.

This light emerges out from within the senses (*indriyas*) and shines the matter existing outside of the physical body. The Englishman learnt it through personal experience. If you focus your concentration adequately on the *Atma*, it converts into light and guides the practitioner by appearing as a divine Jyoti. Gradually, the practitioner merges into the Jyoti and becomes the Jyoti himself.

This divine Jyoti is the basis for the luminiscence of the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. This Jyoti is manifest in the Universe and guides it.

Amma said that if qualifications and eligibility were to be considered, no one could arrive at Jillellamudi beyond the 7th mile[23]. Without regarding my qualifications, Amma gave me these experiences. What more proof is needed for Amma's benevolence.

[23] The 7th milestone (bus stop) is on the road from Bapatla to Peda Nadipadu; most of the devotees arrive via Bapatla and get down the bus at the 7th mile. From there, devotees used to travel by the Vishwajananee Trust van or by walk. Nowadays, autorickshaws too are plying from Bapatla very conveniently; the road is good.

All is That

Amma perhaps desired that her children should accumulate unlimited wisdom from the Universe; that is why she averred: *'All that is seen is That,'* implying that all that is seen is the form of God Almighty.

Since *One* manifests in so many forms, the effort to discover *Oneness in many* is nothing but *sadhana, the practice.* She also explained that to her children so as to perceive *Oneness is Enlightenment*.

The same pronouncements are made in Gita, Bhagavatham and Upanishads.

Matthahaparantaram Nanyatkinchi dasti Dhananjaya
Mayisarvamidam protram sutremaniganayiva

Meaning:

There is nothing which is beyond me, Dhananjaya, says Lord Sri Krishna. [Bhagavad Gita, 7/7].

Harimayamu Vishwamanthayu
Harivishvamanthayundu sandiyamu panileda
Harimayamugani dravyamu paramanuvuledu.
(Bhagavatham)

'Sarvam Khalidwam Brahma' say the Upanishads.

Meaning, during the practice or sadhana stage, there is God ***in*** Everything; in Siddha stage, God exists ***as*** Everything. I tried to comprehend the import of this by visiting many learned persons and discussing with them, but could not succeed in my effort. The doubt in my mind remained thus.

On April 5, 1974, I accompanied Sri Sri Sri Avadhutendra Saraswati Swamy to Jillellamudi. Swamiji requested Amma to clarify my nagging doubt. The thought that Viswajananee Amma is going to clarify my doubt gave me tremendous happiness. Amma glanced at me as if prodding me to ask my question.

I asked : *Is it to feel that, 'All is That or is It a feeling?'*

Amma said in her natural, normal compassionate tone: It feels like that, my son. Begin with *That* first, and then *It* will convert into feeling. So saying, she pointed out to a golden bangle borrowed from Vasundhara Akkayya, and asked me thus:

Amma : What is this, my son?

Me : Bangle.

Amma : Not bangle, but it is gold, isn't it?

Me : Yes.

Amma : It is not gold, but it is mud, isn't it?

Me : Yes.

Amma : You seekers come up to this point and stop. It does not even feel like mud. *It is That.*

And Amma closed the conversation. My mind now picked up this aspect as a theme for further inquiry.

Mud (Earth) is one of the five elements that constitute the Universe. Where from this Universe has come? Who is the Creator? What is the real form of this Universe? Who am I? What is my real form? ……So many thoughts crowded my mind, all at once, and I set off on my path of inquiry to study the various treatises.

To understand the Expansive form of God, one must firm achieve Enlightenment. Sri Krishna described this as of

Animate and Inanimate Nature as given in the following stanzas (Bhagavad Gita, 7:4, 7:5):

Describing the Animate Nature, Sri Krishna says:

Bhoomirapo2 Nalovayuhu kham mano buddhirevacha
Ahankaramithiyam me bhinnaaprakruti rashtadha (7:4)

Apareyamithi stvanyam prakrithim viddhi me param,
Jeevabhootam mahabaho! Yayedam dharyathe jagat (7:5)

Meaning:
I am the five elements, transformed into heart, mind and ego forms. This is my Inanimate character. The awareness beyond this is animate Nature.

These eight elements have formed into Creation. They are disseminated anywhere; they are omnipresent, formless and motionless. To infuse life into them, the God himself entered into them, and thus, rendered them animate. Both the Inanimate and Animate objects are forms of God. The fusion of both these characters is nothing but the Universe.

If the physical world and the elements such as ego, mind and heart, and the Life Energy that drives them, are all God, then what is impossible? For ease of our understanding, these are divided into animate and inanimate objects, but in reality they are all forms of the same Universal Life Energy.

The same thing is said by Lord Sri Krishna in Bhagavad Gita (7/7):

Mayimidam Protram Sutremani Ganayiva.

Meaning:
'I am present in the entire Universe as the Life Force like the hidden thread in a garland of flowers.'

If we consider the metaphor of a spider, the spider creates the yarn and also weaves a web. The spider is the creator and the object. Similarly, God is the Creator as well as the Object for this Universe.

Why is that we cannot see God although He is all pervasive, present everywhere? Like the thread that binds the flowers in a garland is hidden, the God who is the prime mover of the namesake Universe is not seen by the naked eye. *Atma*, which is present everywhere is also like the thread. If it has to appear, then it appears only in the form of Energy or Life Form.

We recognise the presence of Life Energy in matter in our day to day life. That is the Truth. But to go beyond and understand that the matter or object itself is Life Energy is the way towards Enlightenment. I now understand why Amma said that we stop short at the 'mud' stage.

'Ours is materialistic vision, while Amma has Philosophic vision'

Amma explains her vision by taking the metaphor of a tree. A tree can be differentiated into Trunk, Roots, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers, etc. Every one of these has its own characteristics: form, colour, shape etc. Similarly, although the entire Universe has different forms, names, and characteristics, in fact, it is all One. Further, although *It* appears as two, it is in fact One. Thus, Amma explained the Truth: *All is That.*

A Wish from Amma

September 4, 1980

Amma, who had no desires, one day, suddenly said, 'I have one wish'. Everyone looked at her anxiously.

Amma said: 'Annapurnalayam should not be dependent on any person; not even on me. The clarion call of food should be ringing regularly always. Everyone should be catered to with compassionately. Many people depend upon the food served by Annapurnalayam. The food should be hygienically prepared, and neatly served, to their satisfaction. Annapurnalayam should be managed thus.'

Health of Amma was not so good. Although she was very weak, she was concerned about the continuous feeding of her children.

(Sourced from: '*Srivari Charana Sannidhi*' p. 429)

The Divine Message

Where can I go leaving you?

I am always with you, although you may not see me.

Would I not care for you, like always? The well-being of children is of paramount importance for a mother.

Carry on with the activities of Annapurnalayam, Educational Institutions, Hospitals, Temples…as usual.

Don't worry about running all these? Right now, are you running them? They are being run by you. You are incidentals. The *Force* that runs these now will also run them in future too.

This *Institution* has a bright future.

This land shall become a place for seekers, yogis and spiritual practitioners.

Jillellamudi shall become a pilgrimage centre.

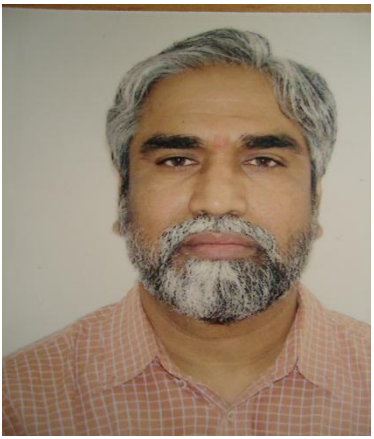
Don't worry that I will not be there.

Whenever you need, I will appear.

(As spoken to brother Ramakrishna on June 11, 1985)

Let Peace and Happiness Prevail in the entire World.

Jayahomata



Dr Srinivas Mudrakartha is the son-in-law of late Sri M. Ramanuja Chary and late Smt M. Vedavathi, ardent devotees of Amma. Veenadhari and her family members have been visiting Jillellamudi for over three decades. The authors have two sons, Post Graduates in Management, who are serving in the corporate sector. While reading the Telugu version of the book, Srinivas was overwhelmed at the intensity of devotion of the author brother Appa Rao towards Amma. Although he had darshan of Amma a few times, it was only during his recent visit to Jillellamudi during October 2012 that he started realising the power of the Universal Love of Amma. It was Amma's inspiration that led to his translating the book into English to benefit wider audience with Amma's blessings.

Dr Srinivas Mudrakartha is a PhD in Science, and also has other qualifications including in Management, Computer Applications & Programming, and Remote Sensing & Digital Analysis. He has had an eventful career as Head of Organisation with several national and international organisations for about 35 years. Veenadhari is an M. Phil, and is well-versed in classical music, Reiki and Pranic Healing.